

WAL-MART COMETH ■ BUSH'S VANISHING COALITION

AUGUST 30, 2004

The American Conservative

RUNAWAY CHILDHOOD



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

POWER POLITICS

Eamonn Fingleton's "The Sun & the Dragon" (Aug. 2) is the type of article opinion magazines promise but rarely deliver. It provides a litany of data that the reader hasn't seen elsewhere, data that challenge old and mostly unexamined concepts. And it provides a contrarian scenario that makes sense out of all this startling new information.

Having said that, I found his arguments provocative but not yet convincing. The largest reservation I have is that he didn't even mention the competition between Japan and China for something they both desperately need: oil and energy supplies. That shared desperation offers the biggest potential for economic friction between the two nations, and promises to grow in importance. For Mr. Fingleton to avoid any mention of it leads me to wonder if he was silent because it doesn't fit his thesis.

DAVID FRANKE

Manassas, Va.

Eamonn Fingleton replies:

I predict that China's energy consumption in 2020 may exceed that of the entire world today. But competition for oil is not a hindrance to closer Sino-Japanese relations. Rather the reverse. The specter of a global energy crisis is just another reason Tokyo is seeking to establish deep and mutually trusting relations with the coming superpower.

From Japan's point of view, China's rise is inevitable. If Japan were to try to hinder that rise, it might delay the ultimate outcome by perhaps ten years. But the cost in terms of permanently alienating the Beijing leadership would be massive—hardly a great trade-off for an ancient nation that famously is much more concerned with the long term than the short term.

In typical jujitsu fashion, Japan is planning to turn the next energy crisis into an opportunity. Not only is it a leader in energy-saving technologies but it has for decades been quietly spearheading the quest for alternative energy sources.

It is the U.S., far more than Japan, that has to worry about China's increasing energy needs. Not only are American consumers and businesses notoriously inefficient energy users, but American manufacturers long ago dropped out of the race to develop major alternative energy sources.

LOCKDOWN DEMOCRACY

Interesting that the United Jewish Federation of Metrowest N.J. would write *The American Conservative* a letter condemning Ralph Nader's view of the White House as "puppets to Israeli interests" (Aug. 2). The UJF believes this sort of loose talk will "promote anti-Semitic stereotypes." I happen to be a practicing Jew, and I also happen to agree heartily with Mr. Nader's statements. Perhaps the UJF should reconsider its assessment of Israel as "the only true democracy in an unstable Middle East region." Israel happens to hold a rather large Arab population (the Palestinians) in virtual lockdown—a decidedly undemocratic act and one that foments much of the anti-Semitism currently threatening Jews worldwide.

STEVEN CAPOZZOLA

Washington, D.C.

A SON'S SALUTE

John O'Sullivan's review of *Who Are We?* (July 19) is by far the most insightful analysis of Samuel Huntington's book in both theory and application.

O'Sullivan is at his best when skewering Huntington's critics, whose response is typically to attack the good professor without reference to his actual words. Amazon.com is emblematic: it features three editorial reviews, all indicting Huntington without directly confronting what he has written; reader reviews (excepting the two who denounced the book while admitting they refused to read it) are overwhelmingly positive, indicating Huntington has not only touched a nerve but that readers are interested and actively engaged.

My father was second-generation Irish and fought along with his brothers

in World War II, my brother is a Vietnam veteran, and I have recently concluded a 22-year military career. I am married to a black woman whose family long predates my family's arrival on these shores. Both families are fully assimilated but exhibit patriotism differently: my wife's family's patriotism is firmly rooted in the 1960s civil-rights movement while my father imparted to me the notion of a clan, though Catholic, more rooted in European/American Protestant ethics than the National Council of Catholic Bishops would like.

Happily, my nine-year-old son cannot pass an American flag without hand saluting it. The question for our future hinges upon how many little Mexican boys delight in similar action.

MATTHEW M. O'CONNELL

Topeka, Kan.

FRIEND OR FOE?

No wonder we're losing! Can John O'Sullivan really believe that establishment conservatives are merely "unwitting accomplices" who are simply being "misled" on the issue of immigration?

These days the primary loyalty of your typical "conservative" is to the Republican Party, and the Republican Party pledges fealty to corporate America. And as we know, corporate America is determined to keep an endless amount of cheap labor coming across our border.

Neoconservatives, making up as they do the high priesthood of the "universal nation" cult, are certain to remain the most vicious critics of anyone proposing to restrict the deluge of Third World immigration. If you are unable to distinguish friend from foe, victory must always remain elusive.

MICHAEL S. BROCATO

Pasadena, Md.

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to letters@amconmag.com, by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

Contents

August 30, 2004 / Vol. 3, No. 16



[COVER]

Runaway Childhood

BY MARIAN KESTER COOMBS America's overscheduled kids need a time-out—and so do their parents. **Page 7**

[CULTURE]

Wal-Mart Cometh

BY BILL KAUFFMAN A small community faces Sam Walton's giant and loses. **Page 12**

[ALLIES]

Coalition of the Coerced

BY ERIC S. MARGOLIS World leaders discover that following George W. Bush is a good way to lose power. **Page 17**

[POLITICS]

Paint the Town Blue?

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III At least the Republicans will hold the Senate, won't they? **Page 19**

COLUMNS

6 Patrick J. Buchanan: Morning in Which America?

27 Fred Reed: The church where Deacon is a dog

35 Taki: The Riviera I remember

NEWS & VIEWS

4 Fourteen Days: Iraqi Take-Out; The Naked Truth; Stupid, Dirty White Girl

25 Deep Background: Scapegoating the CIA; Neconning the VOA

ARTICLES

10 Charles Glass: Sharon's fence turns West Bank villages into prisons.

21 Peter Wood: Boston's politically correct statuary is for the birds.

23 Andrew J. Bacevich: It's time for the generals to tell Washington the truth.

24 Paul Cella: Bush & Kerry—Immigration Radicals

ARTS & LETTERS

28 Steve Sailer: Spike Lee's "She Hate Me"

29 Scott McConnell: *America Alone* by Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke

30 Dana Vachon: *Bergdorf Blondes* by Plum Sykes

32 Clark Stooksbury: *Eugene McCarthy* by Dominic Sandbrook

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIER'S

[STRATEGY]

THIRD ACT

We expected the neocons to hush plans for a new war until after the election—though the *Weekly Standard* did two months ago let it slip that the vote would determine whether there would be a desired “third act” to the War on Terror. But the Bushies, apparently deciding that war talk is good electoral politics, have begun to ratchet up the rhetoric against Iran. The president is “looking at” possible ties between Iran and 9/11. (None were mentioned when Iraq was the designated enemy.) A White House official promises more “intervention” in Iran if Bush wins a second term.

Some see this tough talk as a prelude to negotiations with the mullahs. But we take the neocons at their word. In the aftermath of 9/11, they had a target list of six or seven countries, and Israel has let it be known that it considers Iran a greater threat than Iraq was. So, yes, the prospect of another war—perhaps started by an Israeli air strike on Iran’s nuclear reactors—now seems real enough.

[POSTWAR]

EXIT STRATEGY

The *New York Times* reports, “There is one thing the sovereign state of Iraq can offer its citizens today, and Iraqis are banging down the doors to get their hands on it: a passport out of the country.”

We hope Iraqi cuisine is tasty because there will no doubt be many Iraqis opening restaurants in America within a few years. Of course, there’s no better way to get immigrants to assimilate happily than to blow up their cousins back home. The French tried this during the Algerian War—torturing insurgents in Algiers and, simultaneously, increasing their intake of Algerian guest workers to do the jobs that French boys couldn’t do because they were busy torturing the new cooks’ cousins—and we all know that worked out just fine!



Unfortunately, Iraqis’ strong extended-family loyalties are useful not only in the restaurant business, but also the crime-family business. Moreover, there’s nothing like participating in an insurgency for building the kind of ties useful in organized crime. Not that many years from now, don’t be surprised if you hear about the “Iraqi Mafia” at work in your community.

[ELECTION]

ROCK THE VOTE

Though he admitted to having no intelligence about any specific plot, Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge recently announced that al-Qaeda could be planning a major terrorist action somewhere, against something, “in an effort to disrupt the democratic process.” And he’s taking steps to ensure that any attack has just that result.

Coming on the heels of his half-cooked warning, *Newsweek* reported that Ridge has asked the Justice Department how the November election might legally be postponed should al-Qaeda strike. “Now, based on the attack in Madrid ... we know they have the capability to succeed,” Ridge said. Only they didn’t. The Spanish elections went on as scheduled, with turnout far exceeding expectations. Nothing was “disrupted”—save the ruling status of the party that supported the Iraq War.

If the terrorists indeed “hate us for our freedoms”—the Bush administration’s logic, not ours—it should follow

that suspending the first of democratic liberties by halting a constitutionally mandated election would play perfectly into their hands. Absent some apocalyptic ability simultaneously to level major American cities on election eve, al-Qaeda cannot halt the democratic process—unless we do that dirty work ourselves.

[PROTEST]

PYRAMID SCHEME

Some of us recall antiwar street theater from the Sixties without particular affection. But occasional efforts to satirize the invasion of Iraq make us think that dissent may be one of the things that has genuinely improved in the past 40 years. Noteworthy was this account of protesters at a recent Bush campaign event in Pennsylvania, quoted in Justin Raimondo’s *Antiwar.com* column:

The action got started off right when we arrived on the scene, and seven or eight teenage guys decided to ‘re-enact’ the prison abuse scandals in Iraq by stripping down to thongs and making a human pyramid, while donning black hoods. The police officers on the scene immediately tackled them and led them out in handcuffs.

It’s the kind of thing one wishes had been captured by TV news, and the sort of evisceration of the president’s policies that, it seems, could easily catch on.

[POLITICS]

COLOR UNCOORDINATED

Appearing with children at a Santa Barbara library, California Education Secretary Richard Riordan, who has a long history of gaffes, put his foot in his mouth once again. When a six-year-old rose to announce proudly that her name meant "Egyptian goddess," Riordan replied, "It means stupid, dirty girl."

To make matters worse, the race-hustlers descended. Incorrectly assuming that the girl was black, Assemblyman Mervyn Dymally—who asked if Riordan would have "done that to a white girl"—called for the secretary's resignation and scheduled a protest. When it turned out that the girl was white, Dymally's office canceled the event and released a statement declaring the issue closed.

Rarely has there been a clearer example of the identity-politics mindset: a state official who makes a boneheaded comment to a minority child should surely resign, but if the same comment is made to a white child it is not a big deal. Riordan's words were juvenile and foolish, but those of his racially motivated, opportunistic detractors were pernicious.

[MIDEAST]

ROADBLOCK TO PEACE

It has long been obvious that the U.S. has a major interest in a fair resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, which exacts a heavy human toll on both peoples and plays a great role in stoking the fires of anti-Americanism in the Arab world. Israel's Sharon is transparently uninterested in a just peace, and the recent rioting in Gaza is further evidence that Arafat is also an impediment to progress.

Gaza is an overstuffed and often tragic human cauldron, where conditions have deteriorated since the *intifada*. But the outbreak of violence is directed against the corruption of

Arafat's Palestinian Authority more than against the Israeli occupation, which in any event is likely to end soon.

The breakdown of PA authority in Gaza illuminates the fact that Arafat has lost whatever mandate he once possessed. It is plainly in the Palestinians' interest that he step aside in favor of a younger generation of leadership. This has become an American interest as well.

[ECONOMY]

METER MAIDS STILL SAFE

Outsourcing, sending American jobs abroad to places where labor—and sometimes life itself—is cheap, is not new. But in mid-July the *Los Angeles Times* reported a twist to the familiar story: state governments are getting in on the action. A study by the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers finds that more than 40 states are contracting out to the Third World such taxpayer-funded services as food-stamp programs and sex-offender databases.

Many states can't put a dollar value on how much work they've exported; they're not even keeping track. For California alone the figure is estimated at about \$100 million—a drop in the bucket next to private-sector outsourcing, but money that American programmers would very much like to earn. These workers would be happy to administer food-stamp programs, rather than getting in line to receive them. ■

End of summer issue

In keeping with our production schedule, *TAC's* next issue will publish in four weeks instead of the usual two. Have a wonderful summer!

The American Conservative

Editors

Patrick J. Buchanan
Taki Theodoracopulos

Executive Editor

Scott McConnell

Managing Editor

Kara Hopkins

Assistant Editors

W. James Antle III

Daniel McCarthy

Art Director

Mark Graef

Film Critic

Steve Sailer

Office Manager

Veronica Yanos

Publishing Consultant

Ronald E. Burr

Contributing Editors

Doug Bandow, Richard Cummings, Michael Desch,
Philip Giraldi, Paul Gottfried, Peter Hitchens,
Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis, Justin Raimondo,
Fred Reed, Martin Sieff, R.J. Stove, John Zmirak

The American Conservative, Vol. 3, No. 16, August 30, 2004 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. *TAC* is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries —

By phone: **800-579-6148**

(outside the U.S./Canada 856-488-5321)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of your first issue and all subscription transactions.

Inquiries and letters the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales/editorial call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on July 22, 2004.

Copyright 2004 *The American Conservative*.

Morning in Which America?

With the perception growing that the economy has turned a corner and is headed due north again, Democrats seem to be losing that issue as well. But there is

a worm in the apple of prosperity, and the *New York Times* has spotted it.

"Hourly Pay in U.S. Not Keeping Pace with Price Rises," ran the headline over July 18's lead story: "Drop in Spending Power May Gain Prominence as a Campaign Issue." (The subhead to that might have read, "At Least We Hope So.")

The story, however, frames the decisive issue of 2004. Will news of rising profits and new jobs eclipse the dark side of this recovery? For scores of millions of U.S. workers, things are getting worse.

"The amount of money workers receive in their paychecks is failing to keep up with inflation," said the *Times*.

"On Friday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that hourly earnings of production workers—non-management workers ranging from nurses to teachers to hamburger flippers to assembly line workers—fell 1.1 percent in June, after accounting for inflation. The June drop, the steepest since the depths of recession in 1991, came after a 0.8 percent fall in real hourly earnings in May."

What appears to have returned is a phenomenon Americans first came to experience between 1972 and 1994. In those two decades, despite the seven fat years of the Reagan era where U.S. workers were making impressive strides, real wages fell 19 percent.

Now the cancer has recurred. "In June, production workers took home \$525.84 a week, on average. After accounting for inflation, this is about \$8 less than they were pocketing last January and is the

lowest level of weekly pay since October 1991."

But why, when productivity is up and corporations are flush, are workers not demanding and getting pay raises to compensate for inflation and to share in the prosperity?

The answer lies in the law of supply and demand. U.S. workers are in no position to bargain because, in both the U.S. and the global economy, there is a vast surplus of labor for hire—at wages lower than Americans are able or willing to work.

The numbers tell the story. From the peak of employment in 2001 to the trough in 2003, 2.4 million U.S. jobs disappeared. Since recovery began, over a million jobs have been created. But that still leaves over a million jobs lost, plus millions of workers added in three years through immigration and natural population growth.

"[W]ith the lowest number of people employed as a share of the population since 1994, there is still a plentiful supply of unused labor looking for jobs," writes the *Times*. "When Castle Harlan advertised ... to fill 70 to 80 positions at a Morton's restaurant it opened in early July in White Plains, 600 to 700 people showed up."

These numbers frame the issue for Bush vs. Kerry. Is it morning in America again? Or are we breaking up into the "two Americas"? And the deeper crisis remains unaddressed by either party.

In a global economy, how do U.S. workers win steady pay hikes, when hundreds of millions of foreign workers

are able and willing to take their jobs at far less pay and to work longer hours with fewer benefits?

Does either party have a plan for dealing with the four forces driving down American wages, permanently?

The first is deindustrialization, the closing of U.S. factories to transfer production abroad. Some 2.6 million U.S. manufacturing jobs have disappeared in three years. While most of these workers found new jobs in the service economy, they are earning less.

The second is outsourcing via the Internet of white-collar jobs to Asia. These are not just call-center jobs, but are in accounting, medicine, computer programming, engineering, architecture.

Third, U.S. corporations are now importing workers to take jobs of Americans at wages below what an American family needs to maintain its standard of living.

Finally, mass immigration, legal and illegal, from the Third World is a permanent depressant on the wages of our unskilled and semi-skilled. Why hire a Hispanic-American who needs \$12 an hour to support his family when an unmarried Hispanic illegal will work for \$8 an hour?

"Joe Six-Pack is under a lot of pressure," says Ethan Harris, chief economist at Lehman Brothers, "He got a lousy raise; he's paying more for gasoline and milk. He's not doing that great. But proprietors' income is up. Profits are up. Home values are up. Middle and upper-income people are looking pretty good."

If neither party comes up soon with a solution to this crisis of one America steadily rising as the other America slowly sinks, this nation is headed for a time of trouble. ■

[hyper-activity]

Runaway Childhood

The new tyranny of choice now begins at age two.

By Marian Kester Coombs

IN THE WORLD of Jane Austen, nothing much ever happens. Country houses sit in the stately midst of nowhere. Life has precious little variety. *Emma*, for example, devotes half its length to plans for a grand ball that in the end amounts to no more than the same set of characters dipping and twirling to the strains of amateur musicians in a dank candlelit hall.

Miss Austen's characters invite each other to dinner, read aloud, chatter over card games, and when beginning to fidget—they go for long walks. Their chief if not only topic of conversation is other people: relatives, friends, neighbors; family history, character, marital and financial prospects; gossip, scandal, morality tales. They may dabble at watercolors or pianoforte, but their major art forms are visiting, conversing, and letter-writing. Occasionally they may remove to an exotic spot like Bath, but their routine once there scarcely alters.

Two hundred years later, we have many more options. The groaning board of all the world is spread before us as never before, freeing us at last of our dependency upon others for amusement, entertainment, and even companionship. Paradoxically, in a world that boasts more human beings more mutually accessible than ever, where space

and time have collapsed and you can Be There Then as well as Be Here Now, it is easier than ever to opt out of the company of others altogether.

Dizzying choices have trickled down to younger and younger ages. Preschool for three-year-olds is no longer uncommon. Each year a higher percentage of American five-year-olds enters kindergarten, which used to be an optional, once-a-week sort of thing, with finger-paint and baby dolls and edible paste. Now the first-grade curriculum has merged with kindergarten, training children to read, to add, and even to type on a keyboard. For years already, parents' magazines have been running articles on how to slow down and let your child be a child. As one young mother writes in *Welcome Home*, "It seemed like I was always rushing him—either out the door in the morning, or out of childcare at the end of the day, or upstairs for his bath, or through his favorite book before bed. Our time together seemed to be a stop along the way to something else." David Elkind submitted his critique of *The Hurried Child* way back in 1981, but if anything the pace has grown more hectic in the past two decades.

Once the child is in grade school, choice proliferates further. Public or private? Montessori, Waldorf, Christian,

International Baccalaureate? Should the child be tutored or attend an after-school enrichment program? In this multicultural world, should he be immersed in a foreign language before it's "too late"? Does his school go back to basics or teach unimaginatively by "drill and kill"? Does it demand that students "own" their education or treat them like guinea pigs in some warped social experiment? Should the child spend summer at a math or science camp instead of hanging out at the pool?

Things could be worse. In China's mass society, children aged 3 to 12 spend their weekends studying math, physics, karate, and such Western attainments as English, piano, and ballet, in order to become little cutthroat "dragons" and "phoenixes," a live enactment of Dr. Seuss's comic nightmare "The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T." On Monday morning they go back to their regular classrooms.

Turning to extracurriculars, organized sports have taken over child's play in America. The vacant-lot pick-up game of ball has gone the way of three-network, black-and-white TV. The June 7, 2004, issue of *U.S. News & World Report* relates, in "Fixing Kids' Sports," that this organizing surge was initially "driven by soccer," where "leagues grew like kudzu." Football and baseball had become too

difficult for many to participate in, both financially and due to sheer numbers; soccer, official sport of the New World Order, requires only a ball and a field to be in business.

AFTER YEARS OF SELECTING APPLICANTS FOR JUST SUCH **INHUMAN RÉSUMÉS**, FOR **"HAVING IT ALL" ON PAPER**—AFTER YEARS, IN OTHER WORDS, OF BEING A HUGE PART OF THE PROBLEM—MIT HAS THE **NERVE TO SAY** THAT IT IS LOOKING FOR **"STUDENTS WHO DAYDREAM."**

"Drive around your neighborhood," suggests David Brooks in "The Organization Kid," from the April 2001 issue of *The Atlantic*. "Remember all those parks that used to have open fields? They have been carved up into neatly trimmed soccer and baseball fields crowded with parents in folding chairs who are watching their kids perform. In 1981 the association U.S. Youth Soccer had 811,000 registered players. By 1998 it had nearly three million. ... From 1981 to 1997 the amount of time that children aged three to twelve spent ... doing organized sports increased 27 percent."

"Physicians say stress injuries among kids are way up," the *U.S. News* article continues, and those go well beyond the physical. A recent National PTA survey found 44 percent of parents said their kids were made so unhappy by team sports that they quit. The article also mentions that the dropout rate is "up to 70 percent," but since all kids drop out of kids' sports when they stop being kids, maybe that's not a meaningful number.

More significant is another recent survey of 3,300 parents in which 84 percent said they had witnessed "violent parental behavior" and 80 percent said they had been subjected to it themselves. Parenting has become "the most competitive sport in America," asserts Alvin Rosenfeld, a New York City psychiatrist. One girls' soccer team's parents became

so incensed over what they considered biased officiating that the teenage referee was cursed and threatened as she was followed out to the parking lot, where her car was then vandalized.

Horried by the blowback from the pressure they have put on coaches to win at all costs, parents are signing good sportsmanship pledges to curb their worst enthusiasms. Yet adult-run teams continue to dominate across the sports spectrum, from lacrosse to Little League. The latest mutation is "club ball," also known as travel, select, or year-round leagues. Parents persist in wanting their kids to get a leg up, a jump on the competition. In a nation of 300 million, where the same achievement is worth half what it was when the population was 150 million only 50 years ago, nothing but first place matters any more. Who remembers who came in second? There are already too many number ones even to register on consciousness.

David Brooks interviewed top students at Princeton University for his article: "I asked several students to describe their daily schedules, and their replies sounded like a session of Future Workaholics of America: crew practice at dawn, classes in the morning, resident-adviser duty, lunch, study groups, classes in the afternoon, tutoring disadvantaged kids in Trenton, a cappella practice, dinner, study, science lab, prayer session, hit the StairMaster, study a few hours more." Sure, that regimen sounds inhuman, but it works, and in an infinitely competitive environment, how else can you stay on top?

After years of selecting applicants for just such inhuman résumés, for "having it all" on paper—after years, in other words, of being a huge part of the problem—MIT has the nerve to say that it is looking for "students who daydream." *Business Week* interviewed Dean of Admissions Marilee Jones, who coldly observed:

Parents are so incredibly busy. This generation has the highest percentage of kids who have been in daycare since they were tiny. When they outgrew daycare, they had to go some place, so you had a proliferation of enrichment activities, all designed to keep students engaged and learning when their parents weren't home

Baby boomers have such high expectations for themselves and for their kids. The parents think kids have to have music lessons. They're expected to play two or three sports. They're expected to belong to certain clubs. They're expected to do community service. Each one of those activities is headed up by an adult, who expects a lot from those kids

Sounds as though Ms. Jones isn't buying the "I did it for the kids" defense. But most likely both theories are true: Baby Boomers have grandiose expectations, and they are worried sick about their children being able to make it in the new America.

What is the American Dream? An ad for a new Latino-oriented TV show says the American Dream is something you "grab." Fannie Mae markets its mortgages as enabling all Americans to "buy into" the Dream—the little house surrounded by a white picket fence. Forty acres and a mule. A chicken in every pot. A pie in every sky. Get a piece of it: it is the prize all eyes are on. But will there be enough Dream left to go around?

Daydreaming, the new Nirvana, is even more antithetical to the old Nirvana of multitasking than was single-minded task-orientation. Daydreams are sideways, ego-less, untimely, unfocused—like falling under a spell. Who can afford that luxury?

America's booming, globalizing population means more stimuli, more input, more distractions, more challenges, more competitors, more negations of oneself. Each person is born with a greater or lesser will to power (the kind term would be "thirst for recognition"). How pitiable this burden of human nature becomes when we are no longer protected from anomie—the realization of our own insignificance—by time, space, national borders, autonomous economies, or intact cultural traditions. When it's You versus the Six Billion, no wonder people wear obnoxious t-shirts and jack up their car stereos to ear-popping volume. And even then no one notices.

T.S. Eliot was beautifully lamenting fragmented consciousness as early as 1935, when we hadn't seen anything yet. In "Burnt Norton," he even seemed to foresee television:

Only a flicker
Over the strained time-ridden
faces
Distracted from distraction by
distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of
meaning
Tumid apathy with no
concentration ...

TV is now the least of our wastelands. The choices for entertainment, amusement, and consumption of information have gone exponential. Video and computer games, all the way from deluxe PlayStation 2, Nintendo GameCube and Xbox systems to hand-held units, Blackberrys, cell phones, and graphing

calculators. Hundreds of cable TV channels, ESPN 1 and 2 and up, VCRs, DVD players, CD Walkmans, home entertainment systems, and Netflix, which imports any movie you choose to be played on your PC. Net-surfing, Instant Messaging, web chatrooms, e-mail (which now seems archaic), Internet dating, fansites, text messaging, downloading MP3 files, sending digitized photos and movies, online journaling. Talk radio, 24-hour news channels, Drudge, and several dozen other news hubs, blogging, targeted electronic newsletters. You need a titanium belt in

Yet who would condemn choice *per se* or act to restrict it? This is what we wished for, this is what freedom and prosperity mean, isn't it: a whole lot of choices and the wherewithal to choose them. If we find at times that we are doing more and enjoying it less, the reason may not be too much choice but simply unwise choices, choices that replace meaningful experiences with the empty calories of ones that fail to fulfill.

But a whirl of choice also isolates as the imperative of activity forestalls organic socialization. Difficult personal skills like learning to work things out,

WHEN IT'S **YOU VERSUS THE SIX BILLION**, NO WONDER PEOPLE WEAR
OBNOXIOUS T-SHIRTS AND **JACK UP THEIR CAR STEREOS** TO EAR-POPPING
VOLUME. **AND EVEN THEN NO ONE NOTICES.**

Tae Kwan Do to fend off the info being pelted from all sides. There are so many "distractions from distractions" that one needs to be almost autistic to focus on anything.

The riot of pressurized choice goes far beyond education, entertainment, and socializing, of course. Which diet should you adopt? Which miracle substance(s) should you believe in and take religiously? Which environmental toxins should you purge from your life? Which exercise program should you follow? Which cool philosophy or type of meditation should you check out? Which bands and brands are hot this month, and which are not? Have you tried a surgical makeover, mood- and performance-enhancing drugs, gene therapy? On the radio there is an this ad for a pill that "fights fatigue and provides energy all day"—the very edge you need to compete in what our parents' generation called "the rat race."

apologize, and compromise are not being acquired. This phenomenon is a large contributor to the bullying that's such a plague in our schools and among young people generally: there's a savage, feral quality to it, as of a Hobbesian throwback world.

Paradoxically, at the same time as our children's social skills are sinking to *Lord of the Flies* levels, they suffer from a terrible hunger for friendship, comradeship, loyalty, and trust. All the mass-culture sensations among the young make a fetish of friendship. In the world of Harry Potter, for instance, no act is worse than to betray a friend. Friendship is the new romance; that is, where once one strove to find that one true love, now one strives—though fearfully ill-equipped—to find just one faithful friend.

The "organization kid" is a symptom, not the problem itself. "Workaholism" is a superficial description, not a diagnosis.

It is a coping mechanism: overachieve or be engulfed and swept away by the new global proletariat. Where once the state earned its questionable keep by protecting a people from being dispossessed by others, now it welcomes the usurpers with open arms and open borders. As the “have” nations like America continue to import poverty, export good jobs, debase the currency, and tax everything that moves, why should we expect a moderate, well-balanced, co-operative social response from the stressed target population?

The struggle for a place in the sun (even for 15 minutes) has gone global. Further, it has gone individual: every man for himself, and the state against all. People are not fools, particularly when it comes to the fate of their own children. Perceiving no hope in political action, owing to the treachery of the Republican Party, American parents are desperately seeking a berth for their children on the last ship sailing. A rising tide lifts all boats, but a rising tide of vulgarized humanity sends people into survival mode. They anaesthetize themselves with Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft and reprogram their children with Ritalin.

But artificial substitutes for self-esteem can never reproduce the joy of working with, serving, and loving others. Forced globalization is wrecking the societies that real peoples have lovingly labored for millennia to create, and wrecking along with them the pleasures great and small of relations with other members of one’s culture. Jean-Paul Sartre’s morose little drama *No Exit* famously concluded, “Hell is other people.” But they are Heaven, too. Only we can give our stolen significance back to ourselves—and to our children. Miss Austen was clearly onto something. ■

Marian Kester Coombs writes from Crofton, Md.

Walled Off

Sharon’s fence turns villages into prisons.

By Charles Glass

AZ-ZAWIEH, WEST BANK—The soldier, automatic rifle slung over his shoulder like a kid’s backpack, approached the car and announced, “This is a closed military area.” Whenever the Israeli army wants to exclude prying eyes from some corner of its occupied territories, an officer declares a “closed military area.” The incantation permits the army to conceal some of the activities that might, to the untrained eye, conflict with the country’s self-image as a liberal democracy: the seizure of land from its owners, demolition of family houses, mass arrests, and confinement of whole populations to their towns and villages. I was in a car on which the letters “TV” were painted to protect us, if the armor didn’t, from the Israeli crossfire that has killed more than a dozen journalists in the last four years. My producer demanded to see the soldier’s written orders. The young soldier, who spoke politely and in fluent English, said there were no written orders. My producer called the Israeli Defense Forces spokeswoman, who confirmed that Az-Zawieh was, as of that morning, closed. No one was allowed in or out.

Like everyone else stopped on the road, we turned around. Later, some women from the International Women’s Peace Service (IWPS), do-gooders from Europe and America who often put themselves between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian civilians, showed us another way in. We parked outside another village, carried our camera equipment over an earth

barricade, and hired a taxi on the other side. It was a 20-minute drive into Az-Zawieh, where a few hundred people—Palestinians, Israelis, and foreigners—were gathering in the village’s tiny square. They held banners and balloons. As the morning grew hotter, children passed out popsicles. A few people admitted they were afraid. The day before, when villagers made a similar procession to their olive groves, Israeli troops fired rubber bullets, concussion grenades, and tear gas. “Use an onion wrapped in a handkerchief,” one Israeli woman with experience of tear gas advised.

The purpose of the demonstration was to protest the construction of Israel’s West Bank security wall through their fields. The farmers were losing land to the Wall itself and more to the free-fire zone on either side. Most would end up on the wrong side of the Wall and, undoubtedly, their land would become the property of Israeli settlements. But that was not the worst of it. Once the Wall was complete, it would form a circle around Az-Zawieh and its neighbor villages, Deir Ballout and Rafat. Only one entrance, guarded by Israeli troops, would provide access to the residents of the three villages. The giant wall would sever them from the rest of the West Bank. Even the original ghetto, in Venice, had four gates. But what the Israelis are building is not really a ghetto. It is a prison whose inmates will be free to escape, provided they do not return.

The Wall, uglier than its demolished counterpart in Berlin, does not run straight. Nor does it follow the contours of the Green Line between Israel and the territory it conquered in 1967. Instead, it makes inroads into the West Bank and never touches Israel itself. All the land that is lost—about 20 percent of the West Bank—is being taken from Palestinians. The unlikely route will absorb Israeli settlements into Israel and deny Palestinian farmers their soil and, thus, their livelihoods. Danny Rubinstein, one of Israel's many first-rate journalists, wrote in *Ha'aretz* of the designers who had to "perform juggling tricks that boggle the imagination" in order to run the concrete slab of separation over hill and dale, through villages and towns, knocking down houses and trees in its path, all in defiance of geography and law. Within the Wall will rise many smaller walls and fences to control movement more ferociously than South Africa's hated pass laws did. "These fences," Rubinstein writes, "the second phase of the separation fence project, will create five large islands in which the Palestinian populace will concentrate in quasi-ghettos." These five pockets plus the Gaza Strip are the land on which George W. Bush, Tony Blair, and Ariel Sharon are inviting Palestinians to construct "a viable state." No viable state came emerge from this state of madness.

The day before we came to Az-Zawieh, there had been violence. "A small group of villagers," a report from the IWPS stated, "including many women, made their way through the clouds of dust and smoke to where the bulldozers were working. Some women managed to sit down in front of the bulldozers and were later forcefully removed by soldiers." Az-Zawieh's mayor told us that local clinics treated more than 70 people for rubber-bullet and tear-gas injuries. We filmed the mayor leading a procession of peaceniks and peasants from the village to the olive

grove. A 100-yard-wide strip of uprooted trees and combed earth cut the grove in two, the cleared land where the Wall will go. The bulldozers, however, were gone. So too were the soldiers. It seemed there were too many journalists and Israelis there for the army to bother with a confrontation. Boys tied a Palestinian flag to a pole, and many cheered.

After listening to a few speeches, the people of Az-Zawieh went back to their houses. The Israelis returned to Israel, and we retrieved our car for the drive back to Jerusalem. A few days later, the newspapers reported that the people of Az-Zawieh marched again to

The Wall is accelerating what the press here calls "the silent transfer" of Palestinians to other countries in search of work, liberty, or peace. The idea was always "transfer" of the native population to clear the ground for settlers. Now, a Gaza psychiatrist told me, they have lost confidence in themselves. "They say, 'We are good for nothing,'" he said with sadness. "It's like people have been swinging between despair and defiance. Now, they realize defiance is only causing despair." For the last four years, defiance in the form of suicide bombings achieved nothing for the Palestinians and allowed Sharon to build the West

THE UNLIKELY ROUTE WILL **ABSORB ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS** INTO ISRAEL AND **DENY PALESTINIAN FARMERS THEIR SOIL** AND, **THUS,** THEIR LIVELIHOODS.

their fields. The army drove them back. The Israeli High Court ruled that the government should rethink the route of the Wall to reduce the suffering of the occupied people, but it was unclear whether this would affect Az-Zawieh. Soon, whatever the exact route, the Wall will be up. Slowly, Az-Zawieh will die.

Both the International Court of Justice in the Hague and the Israeli High Court recently made findings against the government on the positioning of the Wall. The World Court accepted Israel's claim that it could build a wall to protect itself from suicide bombers, but it said it had no right to do so on confiscated Palestinian land in the occupied territories. If Sharon's only concern were security, the country would be just as secure with a Wall that ran along the Green Line. The Israeli justices did not mind a Wall on Palestinian land, but they said Sharon should not make it absolutely impossible for Palestinians to live and recommended minor changes in the route.

Bank Wall that is similar to the one that has ringed the Gaza Strip for years. In Gaza, desperation is so complete that many people come to my psychiatrist friend complaining of self-loathing. They believe they have failed. They see their leaders as feeble and cowardly. More than half of Gaza's children saw their fathers beaten by Israeli soldiers during the first *intifada*. No one has authority or can offer protection. Because of the attacks by helicopter gunships on Palestinian refugee camps and towns in Gaza, many Palestinian children wet their beds at night in fear, well into their teens. Now, Gazans have begun doing something that has never before happened in Palestinian society: they are mutilating themselves. ■

Charles Glass was ABC News's correspondent in northern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He covered the Iraqi rebellion in 1991 and is writing a book on the Mideast for HarperCollins.

Wal-Mart Cometh

How the retail giant's arrival slashed prices—and a small town along with them.

By Bill Kauffman

IN 1992, WAL-MART COMETH—all 116,000 square feet of it. The Arkansas weed sent up shoots across western New York in the turbid Clinton Dawn. Construction in Batavia, N.Y. “received only minor opposition from those living nearby who feared increased traffic and a disruption of the area’s rural setting,” according to Kevin Saville in the *Daily News*. The silence of Wal-Mart critics spoke volumes. Let the wind blow a stray Wal-Mart plastic bag within 50 miles of Vermont, and the yuppies (if not, significantly, the natives) are up in arms: hereabouts, Landmark Society members and Batavia patriots grumbled. But respect for Free Enterprise (even in ersatz and hypertrophied form) is such that denying Wal-Mart a building permit seemed ... socialistic. And besides, they sell jeans and shoes and charcoal grills cheaper than Carr’s and Genesee Hardware and the diminishing downtown remnant. (Never mind that Wal-Mart is an excrescence of a grand Republican experiment in state socialism, the Interstate Highway System.)

My voice was as mute as the others in that silent night, unholy night. I suppose I am of the old New England school of Thoreau and Emerson in that I distrust political solutions and prefer individual revolutions of the soul. I sympathized with those townspeople who wished to keep Wal-Mart out. But instead of passing laws to compel behavior I would

much rather that my neighbors choose to shop locally. They will only do so when Batavia becomes once more a city with its own flavor and fashions. Whether that day will come I do not know.

The first casualty of the Arkansas behemoth was Newberry’s, Carr’s Main Street neighbor, a dime store with a ’40s-ish lunch counter. (In reveries I see Gloria Grahame spinning on a Newberry’s stool, skirt hiked, smacking her lips over a tuna sandwich.) “But this will never be again,” as one mournful woman wrote to the *Daily News*. “Our beautiful downtown is gone, and we will have to be content to shop the Wal-Marts and Kmart’s or the malls in some other city. Our children will never know the homey, warm, small-city feeling that Batavia once had and could have still had.

Who cared if one bought shirts from Wal-Mart rather than Carr’s? I’ll tell you what difference it makes, in anecdotes big and small. (Anecdotal evidence is always superior to statistics: numbers lie, trust the eye.) And speaking of eyes, for close to three decades Ralph Huber at Batavia Optical has fixed the glasses whose bows I am always breaking and pins I am forever losing—and he does it gratis, with just a handshake and smile and “Thanks, Bill.” Wanna try walking into the Vision Center chain with disassembled specs and having them put Humpty Dumpty back together again on the spot, and for nothing?

On a larger scale, take the tractor factory that had been founded by the Allans of Batavia, sold to Yale and Towne, and merged with the Eaton Corporation of Cleveland before being purchased by a German firm. The Germans fired those salaried employees who were within a few years of a full pension. (These included my father, a draftsman.) The Krauts did so without repercussion, for Batavia was no more real to them than an image on a computer screen. Just press delete and we vanish.

Contrast this with the efforts of Steve Carr to keep open his failing department store. Or consider the neighborliness of the Carrs when my dad’s cousin, the irrepressible Eddie Ballow, discovered that a deceased and destitute relative, the black ewe of our family, had left a cairn of unpaid bills. Eddie, impelled by no compulsion but family honor, went around making good on the dead dead-beat’s debts. Except at Carr’s, which in the spirit of Christian charity simply wiped the debit off its books. Try that at Wal-Mart.

Conventional retailing wisdom supplies a standard strategy for battling Wal-Mart: beat a hasty retreat to a niche as yet unoccupied by the invader. Steve Carr fought back as best he could. When Newberry’s closed, and its popular lunch counter with it, Steve tried to sell coffee (he did not, thankfully, call it javahh!). He closed Carr’s second floor,



CHRIS HEERS

and then the basement, bailing water and scrambling for a toehold on the shrinking deck of his sinking ship. He opened the store on Sundays near Christmastime, even though he regarded doing business on the Sabbath as “cut-throat” and “uncivilized.” Carr’s spent the 1990s slowly drowning in the sort of red-ink sea that even Yahweh couldn’t part. Steve dug into the family fortune to keep from laying off the store’s longtime employees. Anyone else—anyone whose name was not emblazoned on the storefront—would have given up by 1995. Yet he pushed on, customerless, hemorrhaging cash, in the way that only the bearer of an Old Family surname can: to certain, honorable defeat.

Middle-class Batavians drove the 30 miles to the suburban malls; working-class Batavians, some resenting the uppityness of Carr’s past and taking a certain satisfaction in seeing them laid low, our own not-so-Magnificent Ambersons, packed the parking lots of Wal-Mart and Kmart. “If it was purely a business decision, it would have been made a long time ago,” Steve said of the closing when it inevitably came.

Lest our vision become clouded by Morning in America mist, I must point out that Carr’s paid the help peanuts. More than one “associate,” as department stores patronizingly term their employees, jumped ship for the iniquitous Marts. And much as my own biases push upon me the Goliath crushes David story of a doughty local patriot vanquished by the corporate behemoth, facts do have an inconveniencing way about them. After all, Steve was educated at Ridley in Canada instead of good old BHS. His two sons also avoided the local academy. Steve and Beth sent their boys to Rochester’s tony Harley School, which accepts shopkeepers’ sons but has no shop class. Moreover, on my last visit before The Awful News, Steve urged me to dump our Internet provider, the Main Street son of my old gym coach, and sign up with Time Warner. But now back to our regularly scheduled morality play.

Steve ran the show and kept the dismaying books from the third-floor office, with its exquisite design by Batavia Woodworking, its glass cases full of Carr’s memorabilia from flusher times,

and its pneumatic vacuum tubes that swooshed money, like a vertical ATM, from the first floor to the third floor. (That was back when Carr’s had money enough to swoosh.) The last time I saw Steve before The Announcement I had stopped by to pay our monthly bill—in person, Steve stamping it “paid,” just like Sam Walton’s ghost doesn’t do.

The Black Death had in rapid succession claimed Marshall’s News Stand, Sleght’s Book Store, Beardsley’s clothing shop, and even the empire of the Mancusos, the Sicilian moguls who in recent years have lost Mancuso Motors, Mancuso Plumbing, Mancuso Furniture, and now even the Mancuso Theater. (The last-named was sold by one branch of the family to City Church, a growing evangelistic congregation led by “Pastor Marty.”)

Now, one might think that preserving the extruding “Mancuso” marquee would be of interest to those who owe their greens fees and Bills tickets to the Founding Generation. But ancestor worship is the one vice to which the Third Generation is immune. Don’t look back! Keep your eyes on the Glorious Future! Change is Good! Change is God!

In early 2001, the city's toothless Historic Preservation Board, stacked with our preservationist friends, tried to designate the Mancuso Theater a historic landmark. This would have forbidden the removal of the marquee or the effacement of the facade's bas-relief mermaid that is Batavia's topless contribution to art moderne.

The public hearing on the designation took place in old City Hall while City Church and the Mancusos were in negotiation, an unfortunate bit of scheduling that made it look as though the Historic Preservation Board was trying to queer the deal. This *parti pris* was only deepened when a churchman suggested as an alternative to the erasure of the mermaid her transfiguration into "an angel." Wearing a heavenly bra, surely.

Threatened with a lawsuit by the Mancusos, the preservation board retreated; the theater was sold, consecrated, and we prepared to mourn. The

mounted nude statues of movie palace days were wearing shirts. Yet all in all, the theater-to-church modification seemed a nice example of what the preservationists call adaptive reuse. The ecclesiastical style was more than mere Kmart Revival.

We received the bad if unsurprising news in early May 2001: Carr's was closing July 17. Steve was ashamed of his failure. He also dreaded the Buffalo and Rochester TV stations carrying maudlin reports about the death of Batavia's Finest Store. Not to worry, Steve: the stations, owned by remote communications conglomerates, prefer not to acknowledge the funerals as the last of the independents die off.

Steve broke the news to the store's 20-some employees in a morning meeting on the first floor. He stood by the balky elevator that once creaked and groaned as it ascended from floor to floor with all the celerity of Franklin D. Roosevelt climbing the stairs. The employees were

former employees, suppliers and customers of C.L. Carr Company for their loyalty, service and patronage."

On the first weekend of June, the "Going Out of Business" signs appeared in the windows of C.L. Carr Co. William Cullen Bryant thought June the best month in which to die ("Twere pleasant, that in flowery June / When brooks sent up a cheerful tune / And groves a joyous sound / The sexton's hand, my grave to make / The rich, green mountain turf should break"). But WCB didn't have 50,000 square feet of merchandise to sell off.

In the first days of the sale, the store was crowded as it had not been for years. Carr's was doing a land-office business, even though it had frequently offered the same 20 percent off all merchandise in previous sales. "If we had one day like this a month we could go on forever," said Steve as he helped ring us up—for we, too, flew with the circling vultures.

Abashed Wal-Mart customers sweetened their condolences with sugar-coated lies of their fidelity. "Oh I've always shopped here," blubbered one woman. "I feel so bad." She patted Beth's arm and said, "I've got to go up to the second floor and see the men's section," unaware that the second floor had been shut down several years earlier.

Beth approaches me. "I'm really sorry about the store," I say. "Batavia won't be the same." She grits her teeth. "Part of me says that Batavia doesn't deserve a store like this," she half-whispers, as if hesitant to speak too loudly the un-American truth that the customer is not always right, that sometimes he is a stupid, whining, greedy bastard. She recounts her string of losing battles as she tried to convince city and county panjandrums to reduce confiscatory property taxes and to locate the unprepossessing new courthouse within walking distance of Main Street merchants.

"PART OF ME SAYS THAT BATAVIA DOESN'T DESERVE A STORE LIKE THIS," SHE HALF-WHISPERS, AS IF HESITANT TO SPEAK TOO LOUDLY THE UN-AMERICAN TRUTH THAT THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT, THAT SOMETIMES HE IS A STUPID, WHINGING, GREEDY BASTARD.

last marquee in town would be carted off to the junkyard, and the mermaid's aquatic curves would be forever sandblasted away. But they were not—for the Lord works in mysterious ways—and the good folk of City Church saved the marquee and the mermaid, who was repainted a demure tan.

On a gray May day, my wife Lucine and I peeked into the quondam theater as workmen remodeled it into City Church. Steve Carr joined us. The sanctification of Mancuso's was well under way: the bas-reliefs along the wall had been sanded away, and the two pediment-

saddened, but hardly shocked. It was a long time coming.

Steve's statement to the press was gracious, without the twist of gall that others might have added: "Speaking for all our valued employees, who have become friends and more like family, we will all miss our faithful customers and friends. They have continued to support the store and helped to 'keep the faith' to keep open what we think may be the last independent department store in the state On behalf of myself and my family—the Carrs, the Mumfords and Minors—I want to thank all current and

The air is densely sepulchral over the last weeks; the death rattle is the sound of the movable dress racks and glass display cases being rolled and carried out as Carr's condenses, contracts, like a beleaguered band of soldiers drawing in on the last bunker. The mood deepens when Jim Sloper, the longtime vacuum cleaner repairman at the store, dies. Jim was 79, a farm boy, a cracker-jack fixer who loved to tell his World War II stories and who would stare at you for durations sufficient to earn him a Mark on his Permanent Record from Wal-Mart. But at Carr's, Jim was Jim, laboring over a busted hose like Edison at the bench.

It is hard not to see the death of Carr's as the last nail in Main Street's long-shutting coffin. The largest store vacated, no tenant in sight, just as Newberry's has been empty since 1995. Beardsley's is gone. Mancuso Theater is dark (except, I guess, for the light of the Son). Across Main, the mall is as sparsely populated as the more inclement reaches of the Yukon. My friend Mark Shephard suggests turning Main Street into an interactive prison, as Attica's most notorious fiends could be shipped 15 miles north to be ogled, prodded, and begged for autographs by morbid tourists. Son of Sam, Mark David Chapman: celebrities living in our little town! Maybe that

fetching eternal blond Diane Sawyer could fly in to interview some notorious killer, Live from Batavia! As the New York Lotto ad says: "Hey—ya never know."

The retail hub of Batavia: gone. The old ladies stuck in the two downtown high-rises for the elderly who used to be without cars are now also without Carr's. The walkable center of the city has nowhere to walk to anymore.

The boosters are busy hatching new schemes from the same noggins that produced urban renewal. Expand the airport runway! Bring Lake Ontario water to Batavia, replacing the *aqua vitae* from good old Tonawanda Creek!

If You Love Pat Buchanan *You'll Love Constitution Party Presidential Candidate* **MICHAEL ANTHONY PEROUTKA**



Wouldn't it be great if there was a party, and a Presidential candidate, who believes what Pat Buchanan believes about abortion, Iraq, immigration, the "free trade" hoax and the importance of the so-called "cultural war"? Well, there is such a party and candidate – the Constitution Party and its Presidential candidate Michael Anthony Peroutka. To learn more about Michael's campaign themes – honor God, defend the family, restore the Republic – please visit his web page Peroutka2004.com. But we cannot rely on the anti-Christian, anti-conservative national media to get our message out. Please clip the coupon here and send us a generous donation, or contribute online when you visit the web page Peroutka2004.com. For a donation of \$100 or more, you will receive an inspirational, enjoyable and informative Peroutka 2004 DVD. Thanks. God bless you all.

I am able to donate:

☐\$25 ☐\$50 ☐\$100 ☐\$500 ☐\$1,000 ☐\$2,000
(max.)

Please make check payable to Peroutka 2004 and mail to:
8028 Ritchie Highway, Suite 303, Pasadena MD 21122

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, OCCUPATION AND EMPLOYER.

For your convenience, you may use a credit card online at
www.Peroutka2004.com

AMC001



P R E S I D E N T
PEROUTKA
GOD ★ FAMILY ★ REPUBLIC

Authorized and paid for by Peroutka 2004

www.Peroutka2004.com

In mid-June I elevate up to the third floor to chat with Steve Carr. Peter Mumford, grandson of C.L. Carr—Petermumford in my daughter's portmanteau pronunciation—is with me; he points out that Steve's tie is decorated with life preservers, a nice bit of sartorial happenstance. When I later ask Steve to pose before Nina Mason Booth's portrait of C.L. Carr, Petermumford suggests that he strip to the waist, for after all he's lost his shirt. Cousinly kidding, gallows-style.

Before we discuss the autopsy results, Petermumford leads me through the unseen Carr's, the warehouse and basement and rooftop, telling stories about each room and portal, every wall crack and fixture. I think of the 86 years' worth of oral history that will die with Petermumford and Steve and Beth and all the other wanderers of the coming Carr's diaspora. The mannequins are lined up as if for execution on the second floor, in the former men's wear department.

Petermumford shows me the vestigial damage from the 1935 fire that destroyed the neighboring Dellinger Theater on Jackson Street and filled Carr's with smoke and water. We peer up the shaft of the ancient elevator, which in my boyhood had an operator to draw closed the grille.

Our cook's tour of Carr's ended, Petermumford and I sit down with Steve at a table affording a nice view of a flowery still life by Peter's mother, Virginia Carr Mumford. Over the years I've done more than a hundred lengthy interviews with the famous, from men who would be president (they all lost) to men who bum money from me to score crack (Eldridge Cleaver) to men who wrote the American epic (Shelby Foote, who greeted me at the door of his mossy Memphis home, hair long and disheveled, wearing ratty pajamas, and said, "Ah wuz jes' fixin' ta go ta tuh whiskey stoah"). Never had I dreaded a talk as I

did this one. Kicking a man when he's down is one thing; sticking a tape recorder in his face and asking him to describe the view from the floor is the same thing altogether.

But Steve is well bred, and he did his manly best to maintain a cheerful mien. He conceded that the store had been "struggling for a long time. But when your name is on the door, there's a responsibility to the history of the business. And the responsibility of being a citizen downtown." History. Citizen. Responsibility. Egads, Steve.

Selling Carr's was never really an option. "Nobody buys a business like this. They just sort of fade into the history books. The real estate sits empty." I ask whodunit. Urban renewal. Wal-Mart. The obvious suspects. Steve's dad, a progressive businessman, had favored urban renewal: "Our position was that if there was going to be a mall, we were happy that it would be across the street from us." Steve's wife, Beth, the Connecticut Yankee, "was very opposed to urban renewal and said so, but she was not anatomically correct enough to have an opinion."

(Such substances deserve abuse, puritanical prohibitionists be damned.)

Beth also tried, in vain, to convince Wal-Mart to locate downtown so that at least its overspill might sustain the homegrown merchants. Fat chance. The only company that can put one over on Wal-Mart is its evil twin Kmart, which moved from Eastown Plaza within the city limits to a location just this side of Wal-Mart, so that the faithless shopper must pass the Big K before arriving at Sam Walton's box.

The volk loved it. "Batavia embraces low-price retailers," shrugs Steve. "Every time I turn around something closes and a dollar store opens." (In an inversion of Clarence the Angel's dictum that a bell rings every time an angel gets his wings, a new dollar store also opened as Steve announced the closing of Carr's.)

Old Bob Carr was "progressive": all businessmen are. He co-founded the Progressive Associated Retailers, an organization through which the owners of independent stores in small cities of the Middle Atlantic states might trade tips, trends, tricks of the trade. "All of

THE ONLY COMPANY THAT CAN PUT ONE OVER ON WAL-MART IS ITS EVIL TWIN
KMART, WHICH MOVED SO THAT THE FAITHLESS SHOPPER MUST PASS THE BIG K
BEFORE ARRIVING AT SAM WALTON'S BOX.

"Beth is of the opinion," says Steve, assenting, "that with the demolition of downtown Batavia, it lost so much of its character that there was not enough left to hold people, to give them a feeling of community and of belonging." Anchorless, unmoored, Batavians cast about for any port in a storm. How can one be loyal to a place whose structures, whose shape, whose very outline, have simply been erased by its men of substance?

the stores in PAR are to their town what we are to this town," said Steve in 1990. And then, in the blink of an eye in Bush-Clinton-Bush America, they were gone.

Thirty-four stores have been associated with the Progressive Associated Retailers over the last quarter-century. With the demise of Carr's now there are two: Dunham's in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, and Friedlander's in Wooster, Ohio. The global economy, it seems, has

broken PAR. It's a dirty job but somebody's got to do it: closing stores, that is. "We've never done this before," said Steve. He met with a man who had "closed a number of my PAR brethren, but he ran out of stores to close and so he closed."

There is a tawdry route to closure, the road most traveled, it seems, but the Carrs did not want a tacky funeral. Steve describes the game: "You pay these people handsomely to come in, you give up control, you buy cameras and VCRs and such and as people shop, they get points toward these gifts. They also bring in merchandise that is not your normal merchandise—they mark it way up so that they can mark it way down and sell it profitably. It's not of the same quality as what you typically sell; some of it is the dregs left over from the last three or four businesses that they closed. It leaves a bad taste in people's mouths. We decided to handle it ourselves and just go out with our own stuff."

The last day was not July 17, as planned, but two weeks later. The shelves were bare, the workforce had shrunk to three, and instead of the high drama and pathos of an Official Final Day, Steve just shut out the lights, turned the key, and said that was that. The next week he and Beth and the boys left for a month's tour of Europe: a nice Ambersonian touch, I thought, an insouciant up-yours to the Wal-Mart shoppers whose August vacations consist of waterskiing and tossing empty beer cans into the Finger Lakes. ■

The author of five books, Bill Kauffman is currently at work on The Education of a Front-Porch Anarchist. This piece is excerpted from Dispatches From the Muckdog Gazette: A Mostly Affectionate Account of a Small Town's Fight to Survive by arrangement with Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Coalition of the Coerced

America's allies rethink their Iraq commitment.

By Eric S. Margolis

THE PERSIAN KING Xerxes summoned his vassals to war against Athens in 426 B.C. thus: "... we shall bring all mankind under our yoke, alike those who are guilty and those who are innocent of doing us wrong. If you wish to please me, do as follows: when I announce the time for the army to meet together, hasten to the muster with a good will, every one of you; and know that to the man who brings with him the most gallant array I will give great gifts ..."

Xerxes did a splendid job of browbeating scores of satraps and vassal kingdoms into sending troops to join his expedition against Athens, which the Persian emperor warned was a dangerous, lawless, insolent state that threatened the civilized world. Unfortunately for Xerxes, his invasion of Greece proved a military disaster.

President George W. Bush's crusade against Iraq was just the opposite: it managed to convoke only an embarrassingly skimpy assemblage of vassal states, but the invasion proved a smashing military success, if a subsequent disaster.

Now, over a year later, many of America's 32 allies, tributaries, supplicants, and camp followers that sent a total of 22,000 troops to Iraq are wishing they had never become involved and are seeking escape or giving thanks they are well out of the growing carnage in Mesopotamia.

For many of them, involvement in Iraq became a political poisoned chalice that enraged voters and threatened to undo governments from Tokyo to Tegucigalpa.

What initially seemed like an easy, risk-free way of currying favor with Washington and obtaining more foreign aid, cheap oil, or White House photo ops has become a grave electoral liability, a diplomatic minefield, and a nightmare filled with car bombs and head-chopping fanatics.

Originally trumpeted by the Bush administration as the Coalition of the Willing, the grab-bag of military contingents dispatched at enormous U.S. expense was widely viewed across the world as a fig leaf to cover naked Anglo-American aggression against Iraq.

The incessant repetition of the coalition mantra by the White House, Pentagon, and the U.S. mainstream media was designed to portray the occupation as a humanitarian mission instead of what it really was, an old-fashioned imperial adventure that violated international law and the UN Charter. "Coalition of the shilling" was a more accurate sobriquet. Never has so much bought so little.

Only two nations sent militarily meaningful numbers of troops to Iraq: the U.S., 140,000 and Britain, 9,000. Add to this Anglo total roughly 40,000 U.S. and British-paid mercenaries, known in Orwell-Pentagonese as "civilian contractors."

George W. Bush and Tony Blair are currently reaping a political whirlwind for the unnecessary war they started in Iraq. A majority of Americans and Britons now believe the war was a terrible mistake. Yet in another shameless political whitewash, an official inquiry in Britain

just cleared Prime Minister Blair of any culpability, concluding that everyone, and thus no one, was responsible for “intelligence failures.” Most Britons greeted this fraud with the scorn and contempt it deserves. Blair’s fortunes are still cloudy as a result of Iraq, but he looks likely to hang on for now. President Bush remains on more solid political ground, to the astonishment of the outside world that cannot understand why Americans have not reacted more angrily to being duped into a bloody, expensive fiasco.

Other contributors of troops to the Iraq occupation are also feeling intensifying heat from their voters. The example of Spain is a vivid reminder to supporters of Bush’s Iraq crusade of what can happen to leaders who lose touch with their people. Spain’s hard-line conservative leader, Jose Aznar, ardently backed Bush on ideological grounds,

BLAIR’S FORTUNES ARE STILL CLOUDY AS A RESULT OF IRAQ.

while over 90 percent of Spaniards bitterly opposed their nation’s dispatch of troops to Iraq.

The bombs that killed 200 people in Madrid just before the March elections did not terrorize Spaniards into quitting Iraq, as enraged American neocons falsely claimed. This attack crystallized public anger over the misbegotten Iraq expedition. Spain’s new Socialist prime minister, Jose Luis Zapatero, made good on campaign pledges by immediately joining the Coalition of the Unwilling by withdrawing troops from Iraq, a move that was wildly popular in Spain. Honduras and the Dominican Republic followed suit.

Italy’s conservative prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has also come under intensive popular pressure to pull his nation’s 3,000 troops out of Iraq. Over 80

percent of Italians oppose military involvement there. But ideological solidarity between Berlusconi’s coalition partners on Italy’s neo-fascist and neo-Mussolinist far Right and the Pentagon’s neocons is helping keep Italy committed, though doing so has caused Berlusconi’s popularity to drop sharply.

After none of the fabled WMD were found, Poland’s former prime minister expressed grave doubts over keeping 2,460 troops in Iraq, but elected, in spite of intense domestic opposition, to maintain them until the middle of next year, a decision likely encouraged by lavish stipends from Washington. The Netherlands has announced it will withdraw its 1,100-man contingent by mid-2005.

Norway, New Zealand, and Thailand, all smarting from public protests, will pull their token units out of Iraq by this September. Ukraine, which sent 1,600 soldiers to forestall U.S. criticism of its

egregious political corruption, is considering a pullout. By contrast, South Korea is grudgingly sending 3,700 more men, in spite of violent objections by its people and the beheading of a hapless Korean hostage.

Australia has only 250 men left in Iraq, but even this small number has become a major issue in its forthcoming election. Prime Minister John Howard is looking vulnerable on Iraq as a majority of Australians oppose his Middle Eastern adventure. In a memorably piquant Aussie phrase, antiwar Labor Party challenger Mark Latham described Howard and the other coalition leaders that sent troops to Iraq as “a conga line of suck-holes.”

The rest of the coalition is an opera bouffe collection of tiny states that sent token units to Iraq to curry favor in

Washington. These include such martial titans as El Salvador (361 men), Denmark (420), Hungary (300), Mongolia (160), Lithuania (118), Georgia (70), Estonia (31), Kazakhstan (25), Macedonia (37), Moldova (50), Latvia (120), Slovakia (102), Azerbaijan (150), the Philippines (51), and Canada (maybe 31, which Ottawa claims are not really there). Most voters in these nations opposed sending troops to Iraq. Two exceptions: rent-a-states Romania and Bulgaria, which sent 700 and 480 troops respectively, in hopes of getting into NATO. The last Romanian military triumph was protecting German flanks at Stalingrad.

The only truly voluntary contributors—i.e., not bribed or bullied—were the Netherlands, in thanks for aid in World War II; Denmark, for obscure ideological reasons having to do with either right-wing politics or herring; and tiny Albania, in recognition of America’s salvation of Kosovo’s Albanians from Serb ethnic cleansing and massacres. Further strengthening the U.S.-Albania axis, Tirana’s neo-communist regime just announced that it will send 200 more soldiers to Iraq.

Hungary and other Eastern European states felt a deep of gratitude to the U.S. for their liberation from Soviet rule, though helping Bush’s occupation of Iraq may not be the best way to express their rapture over freedom from imperialism. Notably absent are any Arab nations.

The most interesting contributor is Japan, with 240 “non-combat” troops. This tokenism is the small price Japan pays for America’s security umbrella, which protects it from China and North Korea. It is also a subtle way for Junichiro Koizumi’s conservative government to begin acclimatizing Japanese to overseas commitments of their “self-defense” forces under the guise of peacekeeping and good works; Japan’s small but expensive armed forces are

constitutionally forbidden to operate beyond the home islands. But recent Upper House elections in Japan went heavily against Koizumi's LDP, in good part because of voter anger over sending troops to Iraq. This unease will go critical once Japanese troops are killed and wounded.

The Philippines just announced it would withdraw its 51 soldiers from Iraq after the kidnapping of one of its civilian workers, igniting fury in Washington. Other coalition members are trying to figure out how to get their men out of Iraq, which was sold them as a peaceful, money-making occupation—without incurring Washington's wrath.

Most of the Coalition of the Willing were promised cheap Iraqi oil by Washington, or oil concessions. But as resistance forces sabotage Iraq's oil pipelines, these promises are coming up short, and plundering Iraq's wealth is turning out to be a challenge.

Ironically, far from building a powerful coalition to garrison Iraq under U.S. command, what President Bush has really managed to do is to provide formerly rudderless left-wing parties around the globe with a red-hot new cause with which to rally and electrify their supporters. At the same time, he has made himself the most detested man in world affairs. Those conservative governments that continue to support him and the U.S. occupation of Iraq do so at their peril and are becoming alienated from their own voters.

In short, Mr. Bush has done more to electrify the international Left and give it a sense of common purpose than anyone since Che Guevara. That's true coalition building—just not the kind Washington had in mind. ■

Eric S. Margolis is the author of War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia, and a columnist, commentator, and war correspondent.

Paint the Town Blue?

Neither party has a lock on the Senate—yet.

By W. James Antle III

ALTHOUGH IT'S LONG BEEN the conventional wisdom that this would be a hard-fought presidential election, most political analysts have until recently assumed that continued Republican domination of both houses of Congress was all but a foregone conclusion. Recent trends, however, suggest that key Senate races might be competitive enough to put the upper chamber in play. For the past four years, the Senate has been closely divided and has shifted partisan control twice. Might it flip again?

It wasn't supposed to be close. The layout of the 2004 campaign offered several reasons for GOP optimism about their Senate prospects. The Democrats have to defend 19 seats while only 14 Republican seats are up for re-election. Moreover, 10 of the Democrats' contested seats are in states President Bush carried in 2000—six of which went solidly red—while Republicans need to defend only three seats in states that went to Al Gore. Democratic retirements came disproportionately from conservative-leaning Southern states.

Something happened on the way to Bill Frist's filibuster-proof Senate. As support for the Iraq War has declined in the polls, the enormous advantage the Republicans enjoyed in 2002 faded somewhat. Candidate recruitment in a few pivotal states faltered. And several of the GOP's possible pick-ups have moved out of reach.

For example, some GOP consultants held out hope that California's Senate

race would be one of the upsets of this cycle. Since Barbara Boxer was first elected in 1992, every six years Republicans have predicted that they would unseat her. Abrasive, liberal, and without the luster or high favorability ratings of her senior colleague Dianne Feinstein, the Marin County Democrat seems vulnerable on paper. Every six years, she ends up trouncing her hapless GOP challenger.

This year is shaping up to be no different. Former Secretary of State Bill Jones hoped that Arnold Schwarzenegger had made California a two-party state again. He emerged victorious from a stronger-than-expected challenge from former state legislator Howard Kaloogian, whose pronounced opposition to amnesty led *National Review's* John J. Miller to quip that he was "trying to become the first person to win a job thanks to President Bush's immigration plan." But Jones has so far failed to gain traction against Boxer. The most recent Field poll shows him drawing only 31 percent of the vote to Boxer's solid 54 percent, and he lags badly in fundraising.

Nowhere did Republican efforts at candidate recruitment fumble more embarrassingly than in Illinois. Long viewed as the seat the GOP would have to fight the hardest to retain, one-term incumbent Sen. Peter Fitzgerald declined to seek re-election. Despite a poor recent track record with candidates bearing the surname "Ryan"—after the scandal-tainted administration of former Gov. George Ryan and the

failed gubernatorial bid of the unrelated former Attorney General Jim Ryan—the party initially went with millionaire Jack Ryan as their Senate nominee.

While Illinois has increasingly been trending Democratic in recent years, Ryan's impressive biography gave Republican strategists hope that he would be able to overcome the partisan disadvantage. A graduate of Dartmouth and Harvard's business and law schools, he walked away from a lucrative career at Goldman Sachs to teach at a school with a predominantly black and low-income student body in Chicago's South Side. Yet Barack Obama, a smooth, polished African-American law professor and state senator emerged from the Democrats' crowded primary and captured a commanding 20-point lead over Ryan.

Already faced with long odds, Ryan's campaign was dealt a fatal blow when his previously sealed divorce records were released to the public. Attention quickly shifted from the issues to bizarre allegations from his former wife involving sex-club forays. Ryan dropped out, and the party has been desperately searching for a replacement since. Their most promising prospect so far, former Chicago Bears head coach Mike Ditka, decided against a Senate bid, and Obama appears poised to cruise to a Democratic takeover of the seat.

Another GOP setback came with the surprise retirement of Sen. Benighthorse Campbell (R-Colo). Originally elected as a Democrat in 1992, Campbell switched parties after the 1994 Republican congressional takeover and was considered a shoo-in for re-election. Again GOP leaders scrambled to find a replacement only to be rebuffed by Gov. Bill Owens, a national conservative favorite and every Republican in the state's House delegation. Former Rep. Bob Schaffer jumped into the race, only to draw a challenge from businessman

and conservative benefactor Pete Coors, who is able to tap his family's brewing fortune. The conservative-backed Schaffer is leading within the margin of error in most polls of primary voters while Coors fares better in general-election match-ups.

The problem for the Republicans, however, is that both candidates consistently trail the likely Democratic nominee, state Attorney General Ken Salazar. Salazar is not a typical Democrat. He is pro-life, supports school choice, and has been able to win statewide races even though Republicans outnumber Democrats among Colorado's registered voters by 37 to 30 percent.

Another potential Democratic takeover looms in Alaska, a state that hasn't sent a Democrat to the Senate since the 1970s. After veteran Sen. Frank Murkowski won the state's gubernatorial election two years ago, he appointed his daughter Lisa, a Republican state legislator, to his Senate seat. Bipartisan cries of nepotism rang throughout the state, while conservatives complained that unlike the father, the daughter is pro-choice. The elder Murkowski has raised taxes while in the governor's office and

less certain. A recent survey showed Murkowski leading 44 to 42 percent, while other polls show Knowles slightly ahead. Knowles has broken from the national party on several issues of local significance to Alaskans, most notably by supporting Arctic oil drilling. The race is likely to go down to the wire.

Oklahoma is yet another quintessentially red state where the Democrats have an opportunity to take a seat from the Republicans. The GOP establishment lined up early behind former Oklahoma City Mayor Kirk Humphreys, but former Congressman Tom Coburn decided to interrupt the coronation. Coburn's status as a conservative maverick is well established; he was part of the coup attempt against Newt Gingrich and the only sitting member of Congress to endorse Alan Keyes for president in the 2000 Republican primaries. Humphreys is trailing Democratic nominee Brad Carson, but Coburn—who hails from Democratic eastern Oklahoma—leads him.

While Democrats are doing better than expected in putting some Republican seats into play, GOP candidates are stumbling in a few of their attempted

WHILE DEMOCRATS ARE DOING BETTER THAN EXPECTED IN PUTTING SOME REPUBLICAN SEATS INTO PLAY, GOP CANDIDATES ARE STUMBLING IN A FEW OF THEIR ATTEMPTED PICK-UPS.

watched his approval ratings drop. The popular Democratic former Gov. Tony Knowles, unable to seek re-election in 2002 due to term limits, jumped into the Senate race.

Polls show Lisa Murkowski easily surviving a primary challenge by former state Senate President Mike Miller, but the outcome of the general election is

pick-ups. Republicans hoped to take the seat John Edwards was leaving to run for president. Instead Democrat Erskine Bowles, the unsuccessful 2002 Senate nominee and former Clinton chief of staff, has opened up a 10-point lead over Republican Richard Burr and stands to gain from Edwards being John Kerry's running mate. After former GOP

Congressman John Thune's razor-thin loss to Democratic Sen. Tim Johnson in South Dakota in 2002, Republicans hoped he would be able to come back and unseat Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle. While he has kept Daschle below the critical 50 percent mark, Thune has trailed him throughout the race.

The Senate race in Florida demonstrates the chaotic nature Americans have come to associate with politics in that state. Neither party has yet settled on a nominee, although the crowded Republican primary is the more uncertain. The White House recruited trial lawyer and former Housing Secretary Mel Martinez to run, but he has faced strong opposition from former Congressman Bill McCollum, businessman Doug Gallagher, and state House Speaker Johnnie Byrd. One observer suggested the GOP presidential ticket would suffer regardless of what happens to Martinez: "If Mel is not the nominee, it will depress Cuban support for the Republican ticket. If he is the nominee, it hurts the case against John Edwards as a trial lawyer."

Several bright spots remain for the GOP. Congressman Jim DeMint emerged from a bruising Republican primary to open up a lead in the race to succeed retiring Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-S.C.). Whoever the eventual Republican nominee is in Georgia—a tight fight between Mac Collins, Johnny Isakson, and Herman Cain—he will enjoy a healthy lead to replace retiring Sen. Zell Miller. The Democrats need to win eight out of 10 competitive Senate races nationwide to claim the majority. This is not inconceivable but is usually the stuff of landslides rather than nail-biters.

Political junkies on both sides of the aisle are gearing up a late night on November 2. Before it's over, expect suspense not just over the White House but also the composition of the Senate. ■

Monumental Folly

Boston's politically correct statuary: only the pigeons will appreciate it.

By Peter Wood

COMMONWEALTH AVENUE in Boston is among America's most beautiful streets, flowing, not running, between the swan-bedecked Public Garden eight blocks to hard-traveled Massachusetts Avenue—or nine blocks, if you want to stretch your mind's eye to an effeminate statue of Leif Ericson standing in the prow of his Viking vessel and gazing in quizzical disappointment at the banks of the aptly named channel, the Muddy River.

Until last fall, Anne Whitney's 1887 likeness of lithe Leif was the closest the Commonwealth Avenue Mall came to honoring the fairer sex—or whatever. The double-X-chromosomed sex. The just-arriving gender. The spacious mall that divides Commonwealth Avenue has many statues, but they were all men.

General Washington (1804), his sword drawn (but broken off), sits astride his horse at the Public Garden end, ready perhaps to assist nearby Alexander Hamilton (1865) or Revolutionary War Gen. John Glover (1875) the next block up. Some of the men are a bit gestural. Mayor Patrick Andrew Collins (1908) is just a bust. Domingo Sarmiento (1973), first president of Argentina and one-time exile in Boston, is a grim titan not too worried about sculptural details. And the Vendome Fire Memorial (1997) is more gestural still in that overused Maya Lin way: inscribed names in a wall with an untenanted bronze fireman's coat and hat draped over it. Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison (1885) and maritime his-

torian Samuel Eliot Morison (1982), however, are fully present, in the all-ten-fingers-and-toes sense. The fire in Garrison looks long-since extinguished, but Morison has a wind-blown informality and charm, down to the bronze starfish at the base of his cliff.

If you read this list reflecting calmly on the passing of history and feeling no bubble of rage against the sheer injustice at the mean-spirited exclusion of female subjects, you were probably not a contributor to the Boston Women's Memorial. Several years ago, the Boston Women's Commission decided that what Commonwealth Avenue really needed was a sculptural recognition of great women. The Commission set about raising private funds for the project, and on Oct. 25, 2003, the Boston Women's Memorial was unveiled.

It was a painful moment.

The artist, Meredith Bergman, had depicted Abigail Adams, Lucy Stone, and Phillis Wheatley ranged in a circle around three stones. The women weren't on their pedestals (Get it?) but disporting themselves in other poses. Colonial poetess Phillis Wheatly sort of kneels, with her elbows on her plinth, quill in one hand, head propped in the other, apparently trying to think a rhyme for "vapid." Across the way, feminist Lucy Stone seems to be crawling from a low pedestal to a slightly higher rock, in a manner that suggests that she has just fallen flat on her face and is getting up. A grim-faced Abigail Adams stands with

her arms crossed and her back against her pedestal, as though she is about to give President John Adams a piece of her mind when he comes around the corner.

All the sculptures have a kind of bland vacancy. In Bergman's rendering, Adams, Stone, and Wheatley have less humanity than most department store mannequins. Even the *Boston Globe*, which

does the Boston Women's Memorial say about Boston or the nation as a whole?

First, it registers the institutionalization of dogmatic feminism. No one ever conceived of putting up statues of men simply to celebrate maleness. Of course, in the feverish dens of conspiracy theory known as Women's Studies departments, it is an article of faith that patriarchy indeed celebrates maleness and

lifeless depictions of them are, in that sense, appropriate. In art, diversity is almost always pure caricature.

Last, the Boston Women's Memorial captures our growing discontent with tradition and formality. This sculpture, with its vacant pedestals arranged in an empty-centered circle, sets out to mock the conventions of public sculpture. It moves beyond the informality of the depiction, a block away, of Samuel Eliot Morison, in casual attire, feet dangling from a rock.

Adams, Stone, and Wheatley are portrayed, by contrast, rejecting the public space they have been offered. Perhaps a greater sculpture would have been able to make something of this conceit, but in Bergman's hands it becomes a sour joke.

The new statue by David Frech of Lincoln and his son Tad in Richmond, Virginia, apparently partakes of the same spirit of scaling down the heroic figures of the past to the diminished expectations of the present. But while Lincoln is rendered as a kind of goofy dad chatting with his son, the Bergman trio are presented as ice-cold isolates.

Commonwealth Avenue still shimmers with its 19th-century townhouses; its mall is still arched over with giant Chinese elms. But the space has been marred a little by this inept addition.

The Boston Women's Memorial is, unsurprisingly, stop one on "The Herstory Trail" and looks certain to be a prime destination for delegates to the Democratic National Convention. ■

Peter Wood is an associate professor of anthropology at Boston University and the author of Diversity: The Invention of a Concept.

NO ONE EVER CONCEIVED OF PUTTING UP STATUES OF MEN **SIMPLY TO CELEBRATE MALENESS**. OF COURSE, IN THE **FEVERISH DENS OF CONSPIRACY THEORY** KNOWN AS **WOMEN'S STUDIES DEPARTMENTS**, IT IS AN ARTICLE OF FAITH THAT PATRIARCHY INDEED **CELEBRATES MALENESS** AND **DEPRECATES WOMEN**.

waxed enthusiastic about the project in its early stages, took a breath. Under the headline, "This Memorial Lacks in Stature," *Globe* writer Christine Temin declared the figures "inanimate, like poorly crafted dolls," and observed that Bergman's "attempts at stylization cross the border into caricature."

As if to compensate for the inability of the sculpted human forms to say anything interesting, the pedestals are thick with inscribed quotations. Captioning sculptures is nothing new, but these figures are by far the most garrulous on Commonwealth Avenue.

The importance of public statues, I suppose, is that they are one of the most emphatic ways in which we can state our collective ideals. Washington's dignity and courage, Garrison's fierce determination in a just cause, and Morison's quiet reflectiveness are qualities that, at one point or another, spoke to our deepest sense of who we were or who we wanted to be. Even sculptures that are artistic failures—as I would judge Whitney's Leif Ericson—attempt to evoke something admirable. So what exactly

deprecates women. The vast majority of Americans, women as well as men, rightly view this creed as tedious nonsense, but it is tedious nonsense that has settled in for the long haul, primarily because it has recruiting stations at almost every college and university in the country.

Second, the Boston Women's Memorial is a small link in the chain of the diversity movement, doing what diversity always does: suppressing and subordinating individuality to group identity. Abigail Adams, Lucy Stone, and Phillis Wheatley may have been robustly complex individuals who found themselves in life, as we all do, with difficult choices and limited opportunities to act. Abigail Adams merits attention as one of those who acted with courage, imagination, and dispatch. Lucy Stone and Phillis Wheatley are dimmer figures who may or may not repay closer attention. But convened as a trio merely because they were women, Adams, Stone, and Wheatley lose whatever touch of genius distinguished each of them in the first place. They become banalities. And Bergman's

**Tell your friends about
The American Conservative ...
the new magazine for
thinking conservatives**

Hour of the Generals

The “good soldiers” who lost Vietnam must tell the truth about Iraq.

By **Andrew J. Bacevich**

THE BIG NEWS, all but lost in the welter of attention given to revelations of past intelligence failures and the continuing saga of Martha Stewart, is that the strength of the anti-American resistance in Iraq is growing by leaps and bounds. Over the past year, the insurgent order-of-battle has enjoyed as much as a fourfold increase. If we needed further proof that the war is not going well, evidence is now at hand.

A year ago, when he assumed charge of United States Central Command and acknowledged that Operation Iraqi Freedom had given way to what he candidly called a “classical guerrilla war,” Gen. John Abizaid assessed the total number of insurgents to be 5,000. But according to a recent Associated Press dispatch all but ignored by major media outlets, official estimates of the enemy’s strength have risen to 20,000—this despite the fact that over the past year American forces have killed or imprisoned several thousand Iraqis and so-called “foreign fighters.” In short, enemy recruitment is easily outpacing our efforts to reduce his numbers.

There is a sense in which this hardly comes as a surprise. Despite periodic ebbs and flows, the fighting in Iraq over the past year has progressively intensified. Overall security has deteriorated. Bush administration efforts to portray the resistance as a last-ditch effort by a handful of Saddam loyalists have long since lost all credibility. The truth is that our adversary is shrewd, resourceful, and highly motivated. By and large, we

find ourselves dancing to his tune: he blows up an oil pipeline, detonates a bomb in downtown Baghdad, or assassinates an Iraqi official—and we react after the fact.

But the new figure of 20,000 insurgents—if sympathizers and fellow travelers are included the actual number could well be even higher—does qualify as important in one sense. It affirms long-standing suspicions, vociferously denied by the Bush administration, that we have too few troops on the ground to win.

History suggests that one precondition for defeating guerrillas is overwhelming numerical superiority, with a ratio of 10:1 traditionally cited as the minimum requirement. Even counting the fledgling Iraqi army, allied contingents (some of dubious quality), and the

How many U.S. troops do we actually need to pacify Iraq, a landmass the size of California, with long, open borders and an increasingly alienated population of 25 million? A quarter of a million soldiers—almost twice the number currently deployed—would not be too many.

Bush and Rumsfeld have repeatedly vowed to provide their commanders with whatever they need to accomplish their mission. For public consumption at least, U.S. generals have said that troop strength in Iraq is adequate. But the new, higher estimate of the enemy’s forces has made that position untenable.

Either the Bush administration needs to get serious about winning the war that it so recklessly sought in Iraq, or it needs to cut its losses. To persist in the present course is merely to perpetuate the existing stalemate—with good men and

NUMBERS ALONE CANNOT GUARANTEE VICTORY. BUT WITHOUT ENOUGH BOOTS ON THE GROUND, IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVIDE SECURITY.

modern-day mercenaries known as private contractors, counterinsurgent forces available in Iraq today fall well short of that 10:1 standard.

Numbers alone cannot guarantee victory. But without enough boots on the ground, it becomes impossible to provide security. Absent security, it becomes impossible to gain the trust and confidence of the people, as the newly installed Iraqi government desperately needs to do.

women getting killed and maimed, tens of billions of dollars being expended, and the United States exhausting its stores of goodwill—all to no purpose.

Getting serious means mobilizing the country for an expanded military commitment. Mobilization necessarily entails changes in domestic priorities. It also implies an urgent, costly, and politically sensitive expansion of the U.S. Army, the service bearing the greatest burden for the war’s conduct.

Cutting our losses means promptly beginning the process of disengagement. That implies bringing the troops home, leaving it to the now-liberated Iraqis to sort out their future, and mending the diplomatic fences so recklessly torn down in the administration's rush to war.

The issue is a political one. But military realities rather than ideological fantasies or electoral calculations deserve pride of place in considering the alternatives.

For the present generation of American military leaders, testing time is at hand. Duty demands that they speak unpalatable realities to civilian officials who on the eve of an election campaign desire nothing more than to dodge the truth. Unless they receive immediate, decisive attention, the military contradictions besetting U.S. policy in Iraq may soon supersede in importance the political miscalculations that landed us in this mess in the first place.

We have been here before. In an earlier insurgent war that had self-evidently gone awry, a prior generation of American generals faced a similar challenge. They flunked their test. Rather than confront President Lyndon Johnson and Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara with the fundamental defects of their policy in Vietnam, they kept quiet and went along. They chose to be "good soldiers." As such, they made themselves complicit in a vast and unnecessary tragedy. History excoriates their memory.

Every day in Iraq young American soldiers demonstrate great physical courage in supporting a misguided policy. Whether the current crop of U.S. military leaders can muster comparable moral courage remains to be seen. But their moment approaches. ■

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of international relations at Boston University. He is the author of The New American Militarism, forthcoming from Oxford University Press.

Indecent Proposal

Amnesty devalues American citizenship.

By Paul Cella

IT IS A CRUEL FACT that neither presidential candidate in the upcoming election is serious about bringing sanity to our immigration policy. Sen. John Kerry's proposals are distinguished only by being one step closer to anarchy and one step farther away from the consensus of the American people. The dismal state of affairs brings to mind a crack by G.K. Chesterton, which, as always with him, was much more than a crack. "Mild constitutionalists in our own country often discuss the possibility of a method of protecting the minority. If they will find any possible method of protecting the majority, they will have found something practically unknown in the modern world." When it comes to immigration policy, the American people are not able to speak, even as a majority; they are dictated to by their leaders.

Early this year, George W. Bush announced an ambitious set of immigration reforms, including a major "guest worker" program. More recently, Kerry has upped the ante by proposing to accelerate the naturalization process and to implement an "earned legalization" measure. Poll numbers suggest an equal distrust by the voters of both candidates.

The primary justification for President Bush's proposal is an economic one, and it amounts to this proposition: let us dilute or diminish our citizenship as Americans that we might become richer. It conceives of America more as a market than a nation, thereby subordi-

nating political principle to material interest. In that sense, it is merely the latest step in a long progression of reducing all questions to economics.

In arguing his case, the president has said nothing to reassure Americans that he has really reflected on the idea of citizenship. With Kerry one feels, with flashes of alarm, that he knows quite well what citizenship means—and doesn't like it. The voter can learn all he needs to know about Kerry's position from the symbolic fact that he unveiled his immigration ideas this summer to an organization whose Spanish name translates to "the National Council of the Race." Kerry takes Bush's ideas, ridicules them, and then pushes them farther. Not guest workers, earned legalization; not more green cards, amnesty after five or six years of residency. If Bush's proposal is irresponsible and unwanted, then Kerry's is contemptible. If the one is folly, the other is madness.

The economics of the president's proposal are hardly unassailable, but my intent is to critique it on its own grounds, to meet its arguments as they are presented in the best case. For it is an altogether dubious thing even if it does what its proponents say it will do.

What the president and his allies argue is that this is all ultimately about market forces: the American economy is labor hungry, and the Third World—specifically Mexico—has a surfeit of labor that needs exporting. Economic liberalization is the name of the game.

Free labor is part of free trade. National borders present an irritating obstacle to capitalism. They argue, moreover (and without much evidence), that there are certain jobs—dirty, taxing, labor-intensive jobs—that Americans “will not do,” jobs that must be filled by immigrant labor. They continue: as things stand, this immigrant labor is extant but illicit; it exists and functions, but only under perverse, artificial conditions that distort important sectors of our economy. It is only natural and just, then, that we embrace these workers, document their labor, and bring them and their economic value into the legitimate economy. In brief, make *de jure* what is now *de facto*.

If we accept the premise—that the market is king—then the broader argument is not without merit. It is true that much emphasis has been placed on that famed “pursuit of happiness” clause. It is also true that in the rough and tumble of American politics the vision of America as a commercial republic—a vision propounded by some of our greatest statesmen, including such giants as Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall—has, more often than not, won out. Men like John Locke and Adam Smith, whose great works laid the foundations for modern capitalism, were among the most influential teachers of the American Fathers. In short, the system of free enterprise is deeply engrained in our nation’s DNA.

But what is decidedly not true is that being commercial we cease to be a Republic. In fact, the notion that we, as a people, have consented to subordinate our politics to mercenary economic calculation is profoundly hostile to the American political tradition. America is not merely a market, but a nation—one committed to certain public truths or propositions deemed “self-evident”; a community of citizens locked in discussion with one another about how those truths might be refined and perfected. In

The bizarre notion that the American and British intelligence agencies somehow operate in a political vacuum has been embraced

by the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee and the Lord Butler report. The inquiries largely blamed the intelligence agencies for egregious failures while exonerating the politicians, surely a convenient and predictable outcome. Though some Senate Democrats balked at giving the White House a free pass, the committee’s Republican majority stated that the politicians had not pressured the analysts to alter their reporting. But many in the intelligence community would not agree. A number of Defense Department and CIA analysts reportedly resigned or arranged to be reassigned rather than alter their analyses. At least one very senior CIA analyst has stated that his colleagues were forced to rewrite their conclusions repeatedly to support the decision to go to war. There is also the evidence supplied in the books by ex-Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill and counterterrorism czar Richard Clarke, which makes clear that the intention to attack Iraq was widespread in the White House even before September 11. When the president decided that war was imperative and then went to the intelligence community to contrive a plausible reason for waging one, only a suicidal GS-14 analyst would have dared to stand up and say “no” while Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet was promising a “slam dunk.”



The neoconservatives in the Bush administration leave no stone unturned in their desire to establish group-think on the Middle East.

Voice of America, founded by Congress in 1942 to provide unbiased and depoliticized news to the world, is now finding itself under attack. VOA programs to the Middle East are being cut while the oversight board, the International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB), is dramatically increasing budgets for the semi-private Radio Sawa and the al-Hurrah satellite television station. Norman Pattiz, the force behind the new light-on-news, top-20 style broadcasts, insists that they have been successful in reaching Arab audiences, but one independent survey rates al-Hurra as only a second choice for news in a mere 3.8 percent of homes, with virtually no impact on viewers. Daniel Nassif, head of Radio Sawa and recipient of the IBB’s “Employee of the Year” award for 2004, is a Bernard Lewis acolyte who is associated with the U.S. Committee for a Free Lebanon (USCFL). The USCFL was a major advocate of the Syrian Accountability Act and is generally perceived as closely aligned with Israel’s Likud Party. Its website has links to three recommended lobbying organizations: the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organization, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and the Christian Coalition of America. In 1999, Nassif served on the Advisory Board of the Middle East Intelligence Bulletin (MEIB), the USCFL’s monthly on-line publication. The peripatetic man of peace Daniel Pipes is a co-publisher. The current issue features an article entitled “American Sanctions on Syria: a diplomatic masterstroke?” The article’s answer to its self-posed question is, of course, “yes,” undoubtedly the most sublime refinement of American diplomacy since the formulation of the Bush Doctrine. ■

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.

the Preamble to the document by which we constituted ourselves “one people,” economic considerations are addressed only obliquely, in the phrase “promote the general welfare,” and even then only in the context of five other purposes to which We the People have dedicated ourselves: “to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence ... and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity.”

It is on these grounds and against these standards that politicians must defend their proposed innovations upon our Constitution—and not merely our charter but on all those traditions, habits, and mores that make us a distinctive people. George W. Bush gets no exception from this burden for his

proposal to open our borders, inflate into oblivion the value of American citizenship, merge our labor market with that of the Third World, reward and celebrate lawbreaking. Not only do such revolutionary innovations fail to promote unity, justice, domestic tranquility,

coerce. Nothing was as feared by our forefathers as the exercise in politics of naked will. Government by crude plebiscite is as alien to American political philosophy as democracy is to Iraq. To democracy’s great energumens, America for the most part answered as

THE PRESIDENT’S PROPOSAL COUNSELS THAT A NATION **MAY STRENGTHEN ITS LAWS BY THEIR SUBVERSION.**

common defense, or liberty, but one fails to see even how they promote the general welfare, for the economic arguments presented for these innovations are unimpressive.

President Bush faces an enormous burden of persuasion, and the onus is on him who innovates, who calls for radical change. And this burden will not be overcome by the quick and nasty resort to name-calling that so often characterizes open-borders proponents. “You are a nativist!” is not an argument, and it is certainly not an attempt at persuasion. It is more nearly the murder of republican discourse.

The proposals on the table are unquestionably innovations, despite all the cant that says otherwise. Their objects of beneficence do not comprise a parallel to previous waves of immigration—this has been demonstrated (most recently and cogently by Samuel Huntington) to any thoughtful man’s satisfaction. To be sure, the American system does not set itself emphatically against change as such, for it is far more dynamic than a dead traditionalism. But it does insist forcefully that those who agitate for change submit their proposals to the careful judgment of the community, and even if they achieve a majority or plurality, they must bide their time until they can bring along the minority in good faith. They must persuade, not

Burke did: we have not yet “subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our law-givers.” The American project has always been a uniquely admirable thing: to show the world that government by deliberation and consent, not coercion and enthusiasm, works.

Bush’s immigration proposal as it stands is as radical an innovation on the Constitution of this nation as has ever been recommended. It is truly revolutionary in nature, for if pushed to its logical conclusion, it would mean the gradual overthrow of what we all know as the United States of America and its replacement by something else altogether. It would have us cast off and renounce some of our most cherished ideals: the ideal of Law, the ideal of Loyalty, the great luminous ideal of the Citizen. The president’s proposal counsels that a nation may strengthen its laws by their subversion, secure its borders by their obliteration, enrich its citizens by their impoverishment. It is a reckless and foolhardy project, and persuasion of its merit must be undertaken with respect for us as American citizens and for the tradition we hold dear. ■

Paul Cella writes from Atlanta, Ga.

MOVING?

Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, www.amconmag.com. Click “subscribe” and then click “address change.”

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

The American Conservative
Subscription Department
P.O. Box 9030
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

In the Forest of the Night

I lived once in rural Virginia, in King George County near the Potomac River. My house stood in a broad clearing. On the far side of the bean field the old road

cut through second-growth woods down to the mill, abandoned around the turn of the century and now fallen into decay. On summer evenings, I often walked with Deacon, the family dog, between the high banks that loomed over the road.

Deacon wasn't any kind of dog. He was just a dog, discovered as a lost puppy by the highway. A friendly beast, he appeared to be the consequence of coupling between a German Shepherd and a boxcar. He liked to whuffle in the dead leaves while I supervised the evening.

Of a summer, vast flaming sunsets glowed through the overhanging branches that made the road a tunnel in the coming night, incandescent reds and oranges rolling off into eternity like burning dunes in some unimaginable desert. The air smelled of earth and mold. On such a night, the dog and I adjourned to the forest. The sky slowly burned out to embers, to blues and black as of some glowing bruise. Night fell. Scurryings came from the undergrowth as things came out to eat. From far off came the quicksilver whoop of a whippoorwill.

In my ragged dark woods, I felt as the ancient Greeks felt in their sacred groves, as people have always felt in forests at night—that I was in the presence of something huge and mysterious to which I was not greatly important. There are more things in heaven and earth, many more things, though we have lost sight of this. Just what they are, I cannot say. Deacon may have known.

He belonged in the night as I, a man, somehow did not. Bats flittered and squeaked at the ragged edge of hearing.

I could not have explained the night to a psychotherapist living in the air-conditioned warrens of suburbia, nor to one of the earnest legislative aids on Capitol Hill. For this they are out of tune. Besides, it has become just short of illegal to ponder questions of things above and beyond, of origin and destiny, life, death, good and evil, sin, and what might lie beyond the final heart attack. The abolition of the spiritual is perhaps the most curious accomplishment of our curious civilization.

Odd: until the ashen emptiness of Marx overcame much of the world, humankind thought much about the whence and why and whither of existence. It is strange that Americans no longer do. We all die. Here is a fact that might deserve an occasional comment. The ancients noticed this truth and thought it of note. So have all people in all times—until now. We alone never mention death nor purpose nor meaning. The whole world has thought otherwise. What can be wrong with the whole world?

I sat in the road and called Deacon over to have his ears scratched. He was a companionsome lunk though not much concerned with matters eschatological. Shortly he ran off again to investigate a rustling.

I listened to the intricacy of the woods, to things that crept and flew and chirped and croaked. Again came the sense of an otherness, not a being pre-

cisely but ... perhaps just an intuition of things beyond our comprehension.

The determined hostility to religion today puzzles me. In any age there have been many who didn't believe the prevailing creed and others who concerned themselves only with getting and spending. The active hostility is something new. Not just the government but the schools, writers of commentary, and politicians regard as somehow disreputable not merely a particular religion, not merely all religions, but even the suspicion that there may be something beyond physics.

I suspect that the quiet unhappiness, almost an anger, that grips the U.S. arises largely from the denial of human nature, from a totalitarian social engineering that believes in the unlimited malleability of mankind. The abolition of the spiritual is one of its chief projects. The full force of the federal government compels acquiescence.

The attack has been successful. Few people know anything about the Bible, and in the bland suburban denominations they believe that God is a pervasive force for social betterment, to be tolerated but not to be taken too seriously. And so people have substituted psychotherapy, embraced materialism both economic and philosophical, and do not publicly dare to suspect that there is more to existence than we ourselves. It is a long step down from classical antiquity.

Eventually Deacon and I walked back under the stars toward the house. I doubt that he had decided anything, but then perhaps he didn't feel a need. I had concluded that humanity was perhaps some sort of cosmic mistake and one day would go away. Perhaps it would be as well. ■

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*She Hate Me*]

Spike Lee Hits Bottom

By Steve Sailer

AFTER ITS GLITTERING LAUNCH in the Eighties, Spike Lee's career has been in steady decline. Perhaps the joy went out of Spike's filmmaking in 1991 when his father and employee, score composer Bill Lee, was arrested for heroin possession, shattering Spike's dream of being the patriarch of the kind of dynastic family enterprise that is rare among African-Americans. He replaced his dad with Terence Blanchard, whose morose minor chord maunderings have undermined what little fun remained in Spike's later films.

Spike reaches rock bottom in his new "She Hate Me," one of the more embarrassing movies ever made by a famous director. Critics will no doubt rationalize "She Hate Me" as a satire on ill-informed black male attitudes, but are we laughing with Spike or at him? Spike appears to espouse those knuckleheaded views in earnest.

For white conservatives, Spike has always been an intriguing and disturbing photographic negative because, like his hero Malcolm X, he is a classic grumpy social reactionary: nepotistic, capitalistic, elitist, sexist, and racist. In "She Hate Me," Spike takes his stand slightly to the right of Shaka Zulu as he endorses family values, extremely traditional

African family values: namely, polygamy. Hey, if gays can get married, Spike implicitly asks, why can't a Big Man have as many wives as he can keep amused?

In "She Hate Me," Jack Armstrong, a handsome but glum black Wharton MBA, blows the whistle on his pharmaceutical company's crooked CEO (Woody Harrelson) and ferocious assistant (Ellen Barkin, made up to look like Martha Stewart).

Spike is desperate to tell us his opinion of corporate corruption. Spoiler Alert! He's against it. But then so is everybody else. Even worse for Spike, there was no racial angle to the recent Wall Street scandals, so he laboriously wedges in a lame analogy to Frank Wills, the black security guard who discovered the Watergate burglars. The interpolated fantasy scene where Nixon and Halde- man start shooting at Wills is bad enough, but when Jack sanctimoniously proclaims to a congressional hearing, "I am Frank Wills!" I cringed at how far Spike has fallen.

The now unemployed Jack is propositioned by his ex-fiancée Fatima, who has become a lesbian. She and her girlfriend Alex, who both look like lingerie models, are willing to pay him \$10,000 each to have him impregnate them. Fatima then lines up 16 more lovely lesbians desperate enough for Jack's genes to pay him ten grand apiece.

With so many lower-cost suppliers available, Spike never explains why any woman would offer \$10,000 for any man's DNA, much less for Jack's. Once able to cast Denzel Washington, Wesley Snipes, and Samuel L. Jackson in 1990's "Mo' Better Blues," Spike can now only afford unimposing newcomer Anthony Mackie. He has that under 4-percent

body fat level you only see in black guys, and Spike makes clear that his Jack has good IQ genes, too. Yet, Jack's a Gloomy Gus and is only about 5'-8" (although compared to Spike, he's practically Wilt Chamberlain).

Spike's knowledge of lesbians seems derived mostly from close perusals of the girl-girl layouts in old *Penthouse* magazines. As Fatima, kewpie-doll starlet Kerry Washington makes the least persuasive lesbian in non-porn film history—at least until Italian love goddess Monica Bellucci (Mary Magdalene in "The Passion") shows up later.

We also learn from Spike the real reason lesbians don't like men when the assembled sapphists insist Jack drop his drawers. One glance and they discard their turkey basters and demand he get them pregnant the old-fashioned way. Clearly, their problem is they've just never seen a real man before.

In fact, Jack is such a real man that he not only wins back Fatima, but her girlfriend Alex falls in love with him too. At the end, the three have formed a cozy polygamous family, although Jack, being a tolerant modern man, lets his women make out with each other, as long as he gets to watch.

Football great and legendary wife-beater Jim Brown, the subject of Spike's hero-worshipping 2002 documentary "Jim Brown: All American," plays Jack's dad. In the movie's last shot, he gazes upon his son's new family and chuckles with paternal delight. Spike seems to suggest that if only white society had allowed poor Jim Brown the polygamous arrangements natural to such a magnificent hunk of manliness, he wouldn't have had to smack his ex-wives around so much. ■

Rated a hard R for lots of (unsexy) sex.

BOOKS

[*America Alone: Neo-Conservatives and the Global Order*, Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke, Cambridge University Press, 382 pages]

The Neo World Order

By Scott McConnell

IN THE CENTURY that stretches before us, historians are likely to take as much interest in the months following Sept. 11, 2001, as past scholars have in those preceding August 1914. By the close of 2001, the Bush administration had decided to break off the assault on those who carried out the 9/11 atrocity and shifted course towards attacking Iraq, allegedly a “state sponsor” of terrorism. This decision precipitated a chain of events that we have entered but whose end we cannot foresee. But the first fruits are plain enough: a United States cut off from its democratic allies of long standing and disliked in world opinion as never before, a U.S. Army stretched to its limits by Iraq occupation duty, the main perpetrators of 9/11 still at large, Iraq a bleeding sore of insurgency that has become a main recruiting argument for anti-American Islamists. Recent Bush administration warnings of possible future attacks on the U.S. demonstrate that the president’s policies have not appreciably weakened al-Qaeda and may have actually fortified the group.

Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke’s *America Alone* is one of the first book-length efforts to place the administration’s policies during that time in historical perspective. They focus on the neoconservatives, the group of policy intellectuals and publicists that before 9/11 had seemed only one conservative faction among many but that afterwards emerged as the animating force behind the Bush strategy, essentially hijacking

administration policy to carry out their own long sought-after goals. Despite the boldness of this thesis, the authors’ overall tone is cautious and scholarly: they are the anti-Michael Moore of Bush critics, moderately right-wing members in good standing of the Anglo-American foreign-policy establishment. (Halper is a Cambridge academic who served in the Nixon, Ford, and Reagan administrations, Clarke a former British diplomat now associated with the Cato Institute.)

Halper and Clark don’t have a magic key to explain how the hijacking was carried out; this is not the book where one will find out what prompted Richard Cheney to ensure that the Pentagon and the National Security Council were stocked with neocons in key positions, nor what Karl Rove or George W. Bush actually think of them, nor whether the president’s father voiced objections, or if he did what his son might have thought about those objections. But Halper and Clark do provide a thorough account of neoconservative doctrine—both of its openly stated rhetorical positions and its less publicly touted implications.

The neocon desire for the United States to invade Iraq is well documented; neoconservative groups and publicists had pressed for Saddam Hussein’s overthrow since at least 1997. Why? Clarke and Halper distill neoconservative foreign-policy doctrine to several tenets: the human condition can be defined as a choice between good and evil, and it is the moral imperative for the former to confront the latter; states are defined by military power and the readiness to use it; and ... they have a primary interest in the Middle East. (Indeed, the Middle East policy is the one area in the globe about which neoconservatives can be counted on to agree with one another.)

Surely there is some elusiveness to the formulation: why, a naïve reader might wonder, this special interest in the Middle East? Some pages later the authors write, “the reality is that ... the neoconservative globalist and idealistic trappings are little more than window dressing,” and actually their focus is

very narrowly limited to “the Middle East and military power, most of all military power in the Middle East.”

Is it not bit disingenuous not to mention Israel here? But of course, if one were to assert (it has been done before) that the neoconservative interest in the Middle East is motivated by a particular concern for Israel, accusations of trotting out the “dual-loyalty canard” would follow in short order. In this light, Clarke and Halper’s formulation is quite sensible: an interest in “military power and the Middle East” is an undeniable characteristic of the neocon position. Some pages later the authors conclude, or rather suggest, that neoconservatives felt that Israel was weakened by the *intifada*, and the United States needed to carry out a bold stroke to transform the Middle East. They mention that neoconservatives are opponents of the Mideast peace process (wryly noting that the people who argue America can solve virtually any problem in the world throw up their hands at the impossibility of giving the Palestinians a state) and that some Beltway neocon institutions—such as JINSA, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs—exist to tighten links between Israel and the American defense industry.

They also note, quite correctly, that neoconservatism is not a Jewish movement and is quite open to non-Jews. This is the kind of truth that may obfuscate more than it reveals. Certainly there is a core of the movement (somewhere between *Commentary* magazine and the *Weekly Standard* and Benjamin Netanyahu?), and it is hard to conceive of neoconservatism as a dynamic and cohesive force without its Jewish sensibility, roots, and its overriding concern with Israel’s wellbeing.

Moving from doctrine to history, they note that some felt neoconservatism was dying out as a distinct ideological force in the early 1990s after the Cold War had finished. Core neocon figures like Norman Podhoretz were writing the movement’s obituary. This is not quite right—there was a serious battle over immigration policy within the conservative

movement (the neocons favoring a relatively open-borders stance), and the claim that neoconservatism was “over” was bit of a tactical ploy: if neoconservatives had largely succeeded in making over the mainstream of American conservatism in their own image, they no longer needed to exist as a distinct faction.

But the neocons received (and may have needed) a major financial transfusion from Rupert Murdoch’s decision to back the creation of the *Weekly Standard* as a neoconservative journal, and Murdoch’s Fox News gave a range of neocon pundits a media platform that their rivals couldn’t match. Without Murdoch, neoconservatism would not have been so well positioned to make its way into the Bush administration—which affirms, perhaps, that neoconservatism really is not entirely Jewish in its important pillars. The role of the Australian-born magnate is a worthy subject for a great novel, for he is given to saying things in private that no neocon is likely to say. The important thing, however, is that he has unambiguously chosen neoconservatism as the ideological horse to back in the United States.

Halper and Clarke remind us that the first generation of neoconservative eminences was a brilliant lot—top scholars or extremely well-rounded intellectuals (Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel P. Moynihan, Nathan Glazer). Their successors (Bill Kristol, John Podhoretz, Douglas Feith) are by contrast facile polemicists or skilled bureaucrats. This is not necessarily to say that the older generation was more moderate (though some, like Nathan Glazer clearly were) but they were certainly more interesting.

And yet the younger generation has achieved a kind of power of which their parents could hardly dream. This is in great part due to the rise of conservative mass media: in a time of national crisis, it is more important to be able to lay out talking points that will be repeated over and over by various “experts” on Fox News than it is to compose an essay laced with elegant aphorisms for *Partisan Review* or the *Public Interest*.

America Alone has a strong chapter on the role of mass media after 9/11, explaining how much of the conservative press was turned into an echo chamber of neocon arguments asserting that Iraq was inextricably bound up in the War on Terror—though there was no real evidence for it. It is not surprising to learn that Fox News was particularly effective in disseminating information that simply wasn’t true: regular viewers of Fox were far more likely than fans of other networks to believe that evidence of links between Iraq and al-Qaeda had been found, that weapons of mass destruction had been discovered in Iraq, or that world public opinion supported the Bush invasion. Fox viewers were three times more likely than viewers of other networks to believe all three of these things. Yet Fox was hardly uniquely culpable—there was, by 2001, an entire web of conservative media outlets devoted to priming their audiences to support a war plan built on a longstanding neocon target list. After 9/11, the country seemed in thrall to an entire discourse. “Seemingly out of nowhere,” Clarke and Halper write, “Iraq was represented as an immediate danger to America The neoconservatives linked their preexisting agenda (an attack on Iraq) to a separate event (9/11) and thus created an entirely new reality. It was like attaching a line of railroad cars to a locomotive of which they were the secret drivers.”

Clarke and Halper have written an extremely useful book. One can quibble with some of their points or smile at the caution of some of their formulations. They make at least one odd factual error, asserting that “Straussian” Werner Dannhauser became editor of *Commentary* after Norman Podhoretz’s retirement—the sort of mistake that old-fashioned “pre-Internet” historians would never make. But the authors have quite rapidly digested and made sense of a huge amount of material on neoconservatives and reached bold conclusions. Anyone seeking to understand the turn American foreign policy has taken in the past three years will need to come to terms with their arguments. ■

[*Bergdorf Blondes*, Plum Sykes, Miramax, 320 pages]

Heroine Chick

By Dana Vachon

PEOPLE KEEP SAYING the nastiest things about Plum Sykes’s debut novel, *Bergdorf Blondes*. They say that the work lacks winning characters and plot. A cruel few have even taken it upon themselves to point out that there is no character development. This seems hardly worth mentioning in a book already noted for its lack of plot and characters; there is really nothing here to develop, and still less of nothing to develop that nothing with. One by one the critics have damned *Bergdorf Blondes* to the lowest cantos of literary hell, that moth-ridden steppe where the Dewey Decimal system means nothing and J.D. Salinger rolls forever in a tub of Ben-Gay with Joyce Maynard.

If the many writers of chick literature were all Amish (which is just the case in at least one far-off parallel universe) this book would be an eleven-fingered child incapable of farm work. *Bergdorf Blondes* is cursed with the worst traits of its genre and blessed with no finer attributes. Still, it sells. Across the country chiseled Johnnies and willing Janes place it on beach towels as they rub coconut oil into one another’s firm skin, then sit down to let Ms. Sykes’s prose pass through their minds as effortlessly as the sand sifts between their toes. This is because, without knowing it, Plum Sykes has created a work that speaks to people. This is no ordinary beach read but an entirely unintended bourgeois *Odyssey*.

The book is most damnable and notable for its protagonist, a nameless non-character. No one in her world addresses her by name. She is similarly a stranger to herself, and goes only by “Moi.” It is easy to take Moi to task for her lack of motivation, conflict, background, and growth. Yet in a delicious sense it is these very shortcomings that make her an improbable modern heroine.

Modern Manhattan has a conflicted relationship with individuals. The island creates cults of personality around an exalted few while enforcing strict codes of dress and behavior on the many who flock about them, dreaming of the day when they will rise above the mob and have their own cults. Then all will be made right. This is why investment bankers wear suspenders when they make managing director, and Ivy League graduates willingly fetch coffee for publicists and designers during the most taut hours of their youth.

Moi and her socialite friends move through this world in a bid to find fulfillment through marriage. They all want to find a PH (Prospective Husband). The very most desirable form of PH zooms about the troposphere in a PJ (Private Jet). The ideal goal is to find an MIT (Mogul In Training). MITs often have PJs and therefore make for perfect PHs. The frightening part is that it is all logically quite sound. Indeed, if the reduction of status symbols and social phenomena to pleasant acronyms were the stuff of great literature, Plum Sykes would be Thomas Mann and this book would be *The Magic Mountain*. Only nothing would ever happen because Hans Castorp would spend each moment of his seven-year stay at the sanitarium appraising the designer labels on his fellow convalescents' bathrobes. Yet these are dyslexic times. We have Islamists in the subways and Bill Clinton on every talk show imaginable. This is why Moi is such an appropriate character, and a success despite her flaws. In an age where nothing makes sense, sauntering through life with a closet full of Marc Jacobs and a head full of tau-tologies isn't banal in the slightest; it is a manifestation of the survival instinct.

Perhaps this is why the book takes on epic overtones as Moi sets out to find her Prospective Husband. Ms. Sykes received a classical education at Oxford, and so it is worth noting that the non-plot of her book contains the first example of ring-structures in modern chick-literature. Moi moves through five suitors in her search for the perfect

Prospective Husband. Though it will hardly please the feminist lit-crit community, these five men dictate the narrative arc of the story and the different phases of Moi's own laughable character development. Each man offers Moi so much of what she wants but, perhaps as commentary on the fallen state of all humanity (though probably not), is incapable of making her truly happy. The brilliant artist is manic-depressive! The powerful mogul is married! The European noble is, the horror, a playboy! One by one Moi turns to them to make her dreams come true. Sweet, giving Moi offers so freely all the trust and love available to a character with absolutely no depth. One by one, they break her heart. Sometimes Moi cries.

But by far the best part is when she tries to kill herself. Moi's failed Advil-suicide is satisfying on many levels. There is of course the hope that the book might end early with her demise. There is also the lofty promise that the first half of the work might exist simply as prelude to a high-concept second half. This might take place in heaven or hell, perhaps both, and could be written in the style of the magical realists. But *La Mort De Moi* is most satisfying as a katabasis placed perfectly in the middle of the plot structure that defines the thoughtless journey of this vague woman through her own reasonless world.

SWEET, GIVING MOI OFFERS SO FREELY ALL THE TRUST AND LOVE AVAILABLE TO A CHARACTER WITH ABSOLUTELY NO DEPTH.

It is a suicide so bourgeois that it may well guarantee *Bergdorf Blondes* a place on every school reading list when the Communists finally get their act together and make good on that whole revolution thing. They will teach it alongside Dickens as an example of just how depleted the human spirit can become in late-stage capitalism. The episode is of course an attempt at black humor, but it fails because Moi is so shallow that there is nothing about her that is really worth

satirizing. What we are left with is a striking portrait of what happens to modern man when he places all of his faith in communal society (fashion) and science. No other work of chick literature has achieved so much by setting out to do so little, and for this incredibly economical use of the language Ms. Sykes must be applauded. As Moi prepares her final check-out, it is difficult to imagine that the world might not be better off without her. "Obviously the Ritz robe was compulsory ... my rhinestone-trimmed silver Manolos would go brilliantly with it. I drew the curtains and took off all my clothes. I put on the Manolos. I have to say, they looked awesome with nothing else on. I washed down eight Advil with the mimosa and lay down." Soon all is darkness.

There is no question about what happens to Moi as she lies in Ritz suite, hovering between life and death. Although Sykes doesn't address the issue, the reader knows that she heads straight to her own Satresque hell. It is a never-ending Chanel sample sale where the clothes come only in plus-sizes. Poor Moi, who gets knocked about by women who live their lives unafraid of carbohydrates and cannot beat her way to anything worth buying. When she does, it doesn't fit because this is hell, where Chanel designs only for the obese. Oh, the horror! Spirit, take me back! And so

it goes; the suicide is a failure, and Moi wakes up in her suite at the Ritz to find the mysterious movie director Charlie Dunlain by her side. He dates her best friend Julie Bergdorf but has always been curiously concerned for Moi's well being. He thinks that her life is spinning out of control. He wants her to stop drinking so much booze and sleeping with so many married men.

Fresh from her katabasis, Moi is a changed woman. She is ready to listen.

It isn't much in the way of character development but given that so much of the rest of the novel is sacrificed to the autistic regurgitation of designer labels, we can hardly take umbrage. Could Charlie Dunlain be the man for Moi? Might he have been the one for her all along? Could he reunite her with her Anglo roots and complete her American life by secretly being an English Earl who shed his peerage for the pursuit of success as an ultra-hip indie film director in Hollywood? Is such an absurd ending even possible? It would take a literary radical with no regard for the fundamentals of sound writing even to attempt such a thing.

But sleep well, good reader. In Manhattan there lives such a woman. Squint across the horizon on a clear day and you can see Plum Sykes standing in a big window on a high floor of a grand apartment building in Manhattan. She is watching her book climb the bestseller lists, unaffected by shortcomings. Chick literature works because it feigns realism even as it offers something far more simple: a skewed, solipsistic vision of American life. How else could Carrie Bradshaw have afforded all of those expensive shoes on a *New York Observer* salary?

The genre now finds its fullest form in *Bergdorf Blondes*, which feigns plot and

characters while offering something far more simple: a brief, delicious break from reality. That is why this novel won't leave the bestseller list, where it spends weeks alongside the latest from Danielle Steele. America has had enough of reality. The world has more compelling characters than it ever wanted. You know their names: Bush, Ridge, Bremer, bin Laden, Ashcroft, Arafat, and Sharon. They have motives galore, and with machine-guntoting National Guardsmen patrolling Grand Central Station, who can rightly complain about lack of plot development? This is why Americans love *Bergdorf Blondes*. Moi only looks like an ill-formed protagonist. In truth, she is a new breed of superhero whose greatest power is going through life with a gorgeous fake tan and no concern for any of the things that put other people on couches: government, terrorists, cancer, careers. She suicides, but does not die. She does not work, but is not fired. This is why Americans consume her, as they lay beneath the sun on a low UV-index day or barrel to work on a subway where cameras are prohibited. Moi may not be a great literary heroine. But until things get better, she'll do just fine. ■

Dana B. Vachon writes from New York City.

[*Eugene McCarthy: The Rise And Fall Of Postwar American Liberalism*, Dominic Sandbrook, Alfred A. Knopf, 397+xiii pages]

McCarthy Was Right (Sometimes)

By Clark Stooksbury

IT SHOULD BE no surprise that Eugene McCarthy, who figured prominently in one of the ugliest political years in American history, elicits strong opinions from Americans of a certain age. But that does not explain why the former Minnesota senator provokes such antipathy from his biographer. Dominic Sandbrook is an Englishman born six years after the critical 1968 election. His page at the University of Sheffield website reveals that the book was funded in part by the Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation. LBJ was a crafty and devilous politician, but I find it hard to believe that he made plans to fund literary hit jobs on his political opponents 30 years after his death.

Whatever the reason, in any discussion of McCarthy's conflicts with other politicians Sandbrook takes the other guy's side. His account finds Eugene McCarthy wanting as a congressman and senator, a friend, a husband and father, a presidential candidate, and an ex-politician. Just when you think Sandbrook cannot pile on any more, he dredges up a negative review of McCarthy's poetry from the *Los Angeles Times*.

McCarthy gave his enemies plenty of ammunition. He could be vain and arrogant, and he frequently mocked his fellow solons, all of which ill-suited him for a legislative career. His personal ambitions might have been better served had he forgone running for the Senate in 1958 and waited for a chance to become governor. But that was not to be. McCarthy first won election to the



"I feel so guilty doc, I'm not really allowed on the couch."

House in 1948, the same year fellow Minnesotan Hubert Humphrey was elected to the Senate. The careers of these two men would be intertwined for the next 20 years. Both were unfailingly liberal Democrats at a time when liberalism was ascendant. They both firmly supported the Cold War and civil rights for blacks. Both figured prominently in the presidential elections between 1960 and 1968.

While McCarthy voted overwhelmingly with Humphrey and the other Democrats of his generation, Sandbrook spells out the ways in which McCarthy was different. The most important consideration in McCarthy's development was his Catholicism. His faith was strong enough to lead him into a seminary, even after he had become engaged, until he was ejected for being "intellectually proud." His religion moved him in philosophical directions unusual for a liberal Democrat, making him in some respects conservative, even reactionary. He venerated medieval Europe, quoted Chesterton and Belloc. A devotee of the Catholic rural-life movement, McCarthy tried his hand as a farmer only to discover that he was, in Mencken's phrase, a "typewriter agrarian."

Though he repeatedly cast votes to enlarge and centralize government power, Sandbrook quotes McCarthy expressing concern about the limits of federal civil-rights enforcement: "A government cannot run far ahead of the dominant prejudices and customs of its people if its orders and laws are to be fully effective."

McCarthy's first claim to fame was his speech nominating Adlai Stevenson at the 1960 Los Angeles convention. During that campaign he initially supported Hubert Humphrey and stood in for his Minnesota colleague during some debates with John F. Kennedy. At the convention he leaned toward Lyndon Johnson before nominating Stevenson, with the ultimate goal of denying the nomination to Kennedy. Sandbrook credits McCarthy's behavior in 1960 to his jealousy of JFK, who set himself up as The Catholic Politician—a distinction

that McCarthy felt that he himself deserved. McCarthy viewed Kennedy as "shallow, unintelligent and unequipped for high office," and supposedly told Tip O'Neill that he was a "better man" and a "better Catholic" than JFK.

Sandbrook is doubtless correct in observing that McCarthy's derisive comments about Kennedy were motivated at least in part by jealousy. Both were Catholics of about the same age who rose rapidly after the end of World War II. Yet Kennedy rose in large part because his father's money bought him influence and publicity. Had he started from modest means, it is unlikely that he would have gone as far as fast as he did.

McCarthy also figured prominently in the 1964 presidential campaign. He and

As time and the war marched on, America teetered toward a pivotal year in her history. Without his campaign in 1968, McCarthy would be remembered, if at all, as a bookish and unspectacular politician who was reliably liberal on most issues and whose 15 minutes of fame occurred at the 1960 Democratic Convention.

Since no other senator would take the plunge, McCarthy announced his intention to challenge Johnson. One remarkable feature of McCarthy's campaign was his apparent lack of ambition. His announcement made no mention of plans to seek the presidency or the Democratic nomination. Instead, Sandbrook relates that McCarthy announced an intention to challenge LBJ in four pri-

WITHOUT HIS CAMPAIGN IN 1968, MCCARTHY WOULD BE REMEMBERED, IF AT ALL, AS A BOOKISH AND UNSPECTACULAR POLITICIAN WHO WAS RELIABLY LIBERAL ON MOST ISSUES AND WHOSE 15 MINUTES OF FAME OCCURRED AT THE 1960 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION.

Hubert Humphrey were the two leading contenders to be on the ticket with LBJ. Johnson ruled out members of his cabinet in order not to have to pick Robert Kennedy but was torn between the two Minnesotans. He was also determined to leave both men hanging until the last minute. Johnson wanted to make a public announcement of his choice while flanked by both contenders, which prompted McCarthy to deride him as a "sadistic son of a bitch." When LBJ picked Humphrey over McCarthy, it soured McCarthy's relationships with both men.

McCarthy's falling out with the White House perhaps eventually made it easier to oppose the Vietnam War. In 1965, he continued to support the war with reservations. He joined the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that year and fell under the influence of William Fulbright, who opposed the war. By early 1966, McCarthy publicly opposed the war as well.

maries and made it "clear that he intended his candidacy to be perceived as a vehicle for protesting against the war, rather than as a serious bid for office."

McCarthy delivered dry campaign speeches and on at least one occasion he passed up an opportunity to court voters in order to hit the bar. He did not originally plan to run in New Hampshire, considered to be conservative and pro-war, but his staff persuaded him. He joked that all he had to do was to "beat the spread" in the Granite State, which he did, and that he would get support from those who confused him with Joe McCarthy, which he did as well.

Shortly after New Hampshire, the campaign took a dramatic turn. Robert Kennedy, in one of the more opportunistic moves in American history, entered the race for the Democratic nomination. The previous fall McCarthy had suggested him as a candidate to challenge Johnson, but Kennedy declined. Natu-

rally, McCarthy resented the fact that Kennedy sat on the sidelines and allowed him to do the dirty work of mortally wounding Johnson when it looked as if a challenge to the president would be symbolic. Amidst a growing slate of rivals, and the public-relations disaster of the Tet Offensive, Lyndon Johnson announced on March 31, 1968 that he would not be a candidate.

McCarthy's 1968 campaign displayed his split political character. He talked of the need to curb the power of the presidency and refused at times to sell himself the way most candidates do. Sandbrook writes, "McCarthy ... exhibited an attitude ... that was unusual in a presidential candidate. When the television host Johnny Carson asked him if he would be a 'good president,' McCarthy replied with a grin, 'I think I would be adequate.' Before Kennedy entered the race, McCarthy sent Richard Goodwin to tell him he only wanted one term; then Kennedy could take over. 'I'm quite serious,' he told Goodwin. 'The presidency should be a one-term office. Then the power would be in the institution.'" McCarthy talked a good game on the subject of limiting the power of the presidency, but he also campaigned on the need to get the federal government more involved in urban issues, in spite of the fact that it had been destroying

cities for years under the Orwellian name "urban renewal."

After McCarthy left the Senate in 1970, to be replaced by his rival Hubert Humphrey, he did not disappear from the public life. He ran for office several more times, including serious campaigns for the presidency in 1972 and for the Senate in 1982. His independent

gual society and demanded that the Japanese and the western Europeans pay a defense tax to compensate for American troops protecting them from Soviet attack."

After a short stint as a liberal icon, Eugene McCarthy disappointed his followers. Not only did he fail to support Humphrey with sufficient fervor in 1968,

ACCORDING TO KIRK, "MCCARTHY WAS A CONSERVATIVE: HE DECLARED THAT EDMUND BURKE WAS HIS POLITICAL MENTOR, AND NO ONE MORE WARMLY PRAISED TOCQUEVILLE.

bids for the presidency in 1976 and 1988, and for the Democratic nomination in 1992, were more quixotic. McCarthy also worked briefly as an editor at Simon & Schuster and as a columnist for the *Washington Star*. He published several books, including his memoir, *Up 'Til Now*. Sandbrook denounces McCarthy's books as being repetitive in message, but the message, as he describes it, is pretty sound. "He attacked both the expansion of the federal bureaucracy and the role of multinational corporations in American life; he complained that immigrants were turning the United States into a bilin-

but his presidential campaign as an independent almost cost Jimmy Carter the election in 1976. In 1980, he endorsed Ronald Reagan. A review of *Eugene McCarthy* in the *Washington Monthly* snippily compared McCarthy to Ralph Nader. But what McCarthy lost in the esteem of liberals, he more than made up for with his standing among conservatives. Russell Kirk voted for him in 1976, after, as he wrote in *The Sword of Imagination*, "beholding Ford and Carter on television." According to Kirk, "McCarthy was a conservative: he declared that Edmund Burke was his political mentor, and no one more warmly praised Tocqueville. He read seriously and wrote intelligently. In the White House—*per impossible*—he might have turned the most imaginatively conservative of presidents."

Neither President Bush nor Senator Kerry holds much appeal for conservatives in the upcoming election. Eugene McCarthy, on the other hand, presents a compelling case. His votes were not always good, but his philosophy and instincts are sound. His claim to fame is that he derailed a Texan who unwisely led America into war. And—at 88—I think we can hold him to that one term pledge. ■

Clark Stooksbury has written for American Enterprise, Chronicles, and Liberty.

**Subscribe to
The American Conservative
Today.**

Simply go to
www.amconmag.com
and click "Subscribe"

or call

1-800-579-6148



A Place In the Sun



The long hot summer and the silly season, as the British tabloids call the month of August, is upon us, and what better place to be than, say, the

French Riviera. I know, I know, the French are not *la spécialité du jour* nowadays, but what the hell, it beats sitting behind a long line of SUVs trying to get to the Hamptons. Mind you, there are traffic jams galore on the Riviera also, but with a difference. Unlike the wall of steel that moves at a snail's pace east every Friday and west on Sunday on the Long Island Expressway, the Riviera traffic zips about small, picturesque villages, around big towns like Nice and Cannes—and when I say zips I mean it. French drivers, like their Italian neighbors, are all frustrated Formula 1 pilots and put the pedal to the metal at every opportunity. They shout, gesticulate, insult, but burn rubber. None of this 55 mph nonsense and no giving way on the left lane. If you don't move *toute de suite* and let a faster driver pass, heaven help you when he gently bumps you at 85 mph.

So much for driving. There is also yachting, which is what I'm doing, and here things are much gentler. Collisions at sea are far more expensive, although less bloody, and as money is more important than life in chic resorts among the *nouveaux riches*, people tend to be less aggressive.

For me, what the Riviera is all about is nostalgia. On the Cote d'Azur, nostalgia is a way of life for us old timers. It is as if the sunny gaming haven needs to remind her lovers that it was not always Day-Glo hang-gliders, Lycra-clad boy-toys, slot machines, and sewage—not to mention the black leather and blacker sunglasses worn by gay cruisers who scour the sidewalk cafes and expensive outdoor night-clubs.

No, it wasn't always like that. Disembarking from le Train Bleu, one was met by the wild scarlet splash of poppies and violet waves of the wisteria. There were no high-rises back then, only geraniums starting from every crevice. There was little traffic, and the sea was cleaner than anywhere else in the Mediterranean.

I first set eyes on the place in 1952. My parents booked me on the *Constitution*, the liner that did the milk run from New York to Cannes. After eight years of war in Greece, and four years of prep school in America, I literally thought I was entering Shangri-La. The place reeked of pine, blossoms, wine, and sex. For a 15-year-old, it was—to use a modern barbarism—totally incredible. Women without tops, people with white ducks and beautiful yachts, Errol Flynn walking about, Ari Onassis yelling *banco* in the casino: this was heaven on earth, and I swore to myself right then and there that I would return. The moment I could get the hell out of the prison my parents had consigned me to, that is.

When in 1957 I did go back, I immediately began to look for Dick Diver, the tragic Fitzgerald character of *Tender is the Night*. Alas, I never found him, but there were some pretty good imitations. Gianni Agnelli, the Fiat supremo and Italy's greatest Casanova, desperate to have fun but—unlike Dick—always conscious of his duties and responsibilities. Prince Dado Ruspoli, the best-looking man of the time, hooked on opium, kind to rich and poor, reading and writing poetry on his boat, the *Bilitis*. Linda Christian and Bella Darvi, two of the most glamorous and sexy women on the planet, daily taking on new lovers and

snorting cocaine. Bella committing suicide the day her money and looks started to go.

This was the Fifties, when the Riviera had once again become the magnet for the world's elite, a place where Warner and Zanuck, Beaverbrook and Dubonnet, Niarchos and Onassis, Picasso, de Stael, Matisse, Chagall, and Graham Greene were the names to drop, if one was inclined to do so. No Puff Daddies, no J.Lo's, no Russian oligarchs. The *Agneta*, Gianni Agnelli's boat, the *Zaca*, Errol Flynn's sailer, and the *Creole*, Niarchos's magnificent three-masted schooner dominated the beauty stakes, while the *Christina*, Onassis's floating palace, and Sam Spiegel's *Mahlane* closed out the field.

If yachting was the focus of social life during the daytime, at night bronzed shoulders rubbed together in the villas and mansions of various tycoons and princes. Back in those halcyon days, the war of egos was fought on the green felt tables of Monte Carlo and Cannes casinos.

Life was very simple back then. Nobody seemed to have heard of guilt, and fun for fun's sake was pursued with a vengeance. The war had been over for 12 years, Europe had rebuilt and recovered, and I was 21 years old. I lived in the Hotel du Cap, where Dick Diver had first met Rosemary Hoyt, and the rent was less than \$15 per night. It was one big party for three long endless months, or so it seemed.

The end came rather suddenly, in 1973 with the oil shock. Now it's goodbye to all that. The place has turned into a sweaty, overbuilt, and overcrowded hellhole, but late in the afternoon, as I come sailing back towards the harbor of St. Tropez, the smells and colors are the same, and for a while I dream that I'm once again 21 and the place as magical as it once used to be. ■

Haverhills' Best Sellers*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

A spyglass in the great naval tradition...

Adm. Nelson's Telescope™
(with table-top tripod)
just \$59.⁹⁵*

When Horatio Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar, he used a telescope just like this to monitor the movements of the French-Spanish fleet. Our manufacturer has created a faithful replica of the famous scope. *Admiral*



Nelson's Telescope measures about five inches in its "collapsed" position and thirteen inches at full length. Views are twenty-five times larger than the naked eye sees compare to standard binoculars, which give you only 6x or 8x magnifications. If you have every wanted to own a fine telescope, *Admiral Nelson's Telescope* should be your choice. You'll receive many years of enjoyment. *Admiral Nelson's Telescope™* (Chrome) #1069V1129a (Brass)

Here is a lightweight, powerful, and convenient hand-held torch...

Handtorch™ for only \$39.⁹⁵*

The Bi-Pin Bulb

Handtorch is new technology that provides you with ultra bright LED light in either single or tri-bulb flood effect and, if you choose, a third option of "focus control" (Bi-pin bulb). The "water-resistant" Handtorch provides the extensive lifetime of an LED light and has a lightweight aluminum and rubber body. The hand carrying strap and nylon carrying case make it easy to hang on to or strap to your belt. Here is what we will send you:

- 3 5mm white LEDs • 3v 0.2A bi-pin bulb • Nylon bag
- LED Bulb Life: 100,000 hours • 3 x 1.5V "AAA" size batteries (included) • 1 pc spare bi-pin bulb (included)

This light is ready to go the minute it hits your home. It's a must for camping trips, living in heavily wooded areas, or as an all-purpose flashlight for indoor use. Small enough to leave in the glove compartment of your car yet super powerful for use in an emergency road situation providing great lighting for tire changing and under-the-hood visibility. This is the perfect companion on all your travels. *Handtorch™* Item #1105V1129f



***Our "special deal": BUY ANY 2 ITEMS AND GET ANOTHER ONE FREE!**

For instance: Buy a \$69.95 item and a \$49.95 item and get another \$49.95 or lesser-priced item FREE!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER BY
TOLL-FREE PHONE OR BY FAX.
SEE NUMBERS BELOW.

For customer service, please call (952) 942-8010. For wholesale orders, call Chris Simpson at that same number.

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or Visa/MasterCard. Please give order number shown after the item. Add \$6.95 shipping/insurance for your order (except add \$9.95 ship./ins. for three *Admiral Nelson's Telescopes™* or add \$9.95 for one *HandTorch™* or one 48" *Laser Level*; add \$19.95 for three *HandTorch™* or three 48" *Laser Level* units), plus sales tax for MN delivery. You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

Laser Level With Adjustable Aluminum Tripod...

Laser Level™ Kit
only \$69.⁹⁵*

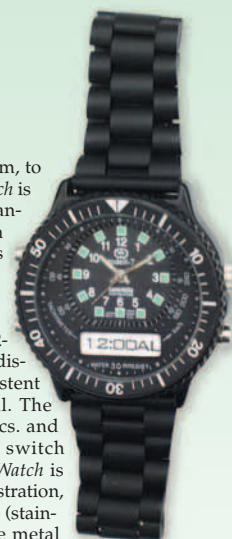
Enjoy the same high degree of accuracy provided by our 16-inch laser level in the upgraded Laser "Spirit" Level which comes with an aluminum rotating bench to allow for leveling 360 degrees and an adjustable aluminum tripod. The level is equipped with a horizontal leveling bubble of high sensitivity which acts as a criterion for the horizontal leveling. The level is also fitted with a red laser which can emit a horizontal or vertical red beam of light up to 1500 feet accurately with just a touch of a button. A tough plastic extruded case conveniently houses the adjustable tripod, the circle bench, lenses, and the level itself. You are now ready to project a level beam of light anywhere needed. This item takes the "do-it-yourselfer" and professional craftsman to the next "level" offering super accuracy and flexibility with any construction project. *Laser Level kit (includes 16" level) #1031V1129c* \$69.95, 16" *Laser Level #1104V1129d* \$39.95 or, 48" *Laser Level #1011V1129e* \$49.95, and tripod only is \$19.95.



Still the greatest watch value; in the air, at sea, and underwater...

Navigator Watch™
only \$49.⁹⁵*

Wear this watch to work, to play, to swim, to dive—and to rally. The *Navigator™* Watch is steered by a sophisticated, ultra-accurate Japanese quartz movement that is powered by a tiny lithium cell. It should last 18 months before needing replacement. The *Navigator™* has both luminous analog dial and LCD display, giving you dual time capability. The LCD display shows time continuously – in 12-hr. or 24-hr. mode. Push the button and you display day and date. There is a subtle yet insistent alarm and a switchable hourly time signal. The stopwatch/chronograph reads to 1/100 secs. and has "interrupt" and "lap" modes. A light switch illuminates the display. The *Navigator™* Watch is available in black metal execution (as per illustration, with linked black metal band) and silvertone (stainless steel execution, with linked, silvertone metal band). Both models are water resistant to 150 ft. The crystal is "mineral glass" – it is virtually scratch-proof. *Black Navigator™ Watch* # 1 0 0 5 V 1 1 2 9 g



since 1967
haverhills®
5575 W. 78th St., Edina, MN 55439

☎ Order by toll-free phone: (800) 797-7367 or (fastest!) by fax: (952) 942-7999 ☎
Visit our website at www.haverhills.com